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THE  
TRAINING OF GIRLS FOR WORK





THE  
TRAINING OF GIRLS  
FOR WORK

*AN EXPRESSION OF OPINIONS*

BY  
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## PREFACE

BY WAY OF APOLOGY

MANY friends and some strangers have asked me to write for them a book about girls. Not that that is a sufficient excuse ; for I declare myself a believer in the “good round no,” and if one has nothing more to say, one can at least say so much. Then they proceeded to assail me by argument. They pointed out that the writer of every book must be of an age, a sex, and an estate : that as for age—well ! I was conveniently floating between wind and water ; that as for sex, a man could know nothing about this matter ; and as for my single estate, it might lead the girls to believe that I did not start on my inquiry pledged beforehand to the opposite side. They were kind enough to remind me that it was not so long since I was a modern young lady but what I could remember, if I tried hard, something of what

I then felt. They added that gray hair and gravity of demeanour would show the mothers, my friends and contemporaries, that, talk as I might, all my profoundest sympathies lay with them. They said further that, by common consent of the civilised world, troublesome children are best managed by spinster schoolmistresses. Finally they asserted that spinsters never had any business of their own, and were specially created by Providence to do what the married women asked of them.

Then I wrote a short paper that was printed in the *Parents' Review*. That was the thin end of the wedge; this is the thick, whereby all my reiterated resolutions are broken up.

I wrote then and I write now only about the training of girls for work. No one can feel more keenly than I do that, intermeddling with many branches of a mother's duty, we unmarried women could only make ourselves ridiculous. But when it comes to dealing with questions of professional life, we who lead a professional life must have something to say to those women whose life has been passed in the shelter of a home, and who have never been obliged to do battle with the world.

E. A. B.

<sup>1</sup>  
September, 1891.

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# THE TRAINING OF GIRLS FOR WORK

## CHAPTER I

### THE GIRL'S HEALTH

“Active and stirring spirits live alone. Write on the others, ‘Here lies such a one.’”

EVERY girl as she was, is, and will be, is a product of inheritance *plus* education. What she did not inherit from her forbears has been planted in her and kept alive. And of no part of the girl's life and characteristics is this more obviously true than of her body, or rather, I should say, of all those varieties of structure and of manner of working that go to make up what we call the girl's constitution, her personal health. What a girl does in the world is



necessarily done by means of her body. And so, since we intend to train a girl for work, it is essential that she should have a body able for that performance.

Some of my friends will break off here in order to try and convince me that no woman's body is able for the performance of work. "A woman's body is a delicate piece of mechanism," they say. "And don't you think that it always injures her more or less to work?" To which question comes a ready answer: "A woman is a delicate piece of mechanism, so delicate that it always injures her to starve."

It is the question between working and starving that has always lain before the majority of women. Most women have always worked, and work at present. Working women are no new feature of the world's economy, for they have been familiar objects since the world began. What is new to us is to see women born and bred in the upper and middle classes at work in England; and those classes do not make up all the world, nor even the greater part of it, though no doubt our temptation is to think and act as if they did. And it is this plain choice between work and starvation that now,

owing to many and complicated causes, lies before a great many girls of the classes that have hitherto relieved their women from the economical necessity for work. Nothing will make me believe that the girls of the well-to-do classes in England are any less able for work than the majority of their sisters in all countries. Look at them as they walk about the suburban streets! They are magnificent specimens of humanity. I grant that now and again a weakly and miserable girl comes to me and asks what she is fit for, and if I said what I thought, I should tell her she was fit to take a year or two's holiday, and to eat and drink of the best, and to be relieved of all care, and at the end of that time to come back to me again. I only do not give the prescription because I am not inclined to pay for the making of it up. And just as I treat that one individual, so the world treats most women. I am not willing to work double shift in order to keep her idle. And indeed, if work be so unwholesome for women, I should in that case become weakly and miserable in my turn. No; if she has no money, the only thing to be done is to earn some; and my business is not to prescribe an

impossible holiday, but to find a niche into which a weakly woman may fit.

Fortunately, the weakly and miserable girls are a small minority. And there is no evidence whatever to prove that a strong girl, taking to work, becomes weak. We must not forget that we are the grandchildren of women who thought it interesting to be pale and thin, and romantic to be consumptive; who damped their muslin frocks to make them cling to their figure; who thought it ungenteel to wear other than kid slippers to match the dress; and who were denied a second help of pudding from love and not from niggardliness. The wonder is we have travelled so far as we have!

But in what we still call the working classes it has been the unvarying fashion for the parents on both sides of the house to work; and what work can do for women or for the race it has done there. Yet women of the working classes suffer no more disability than their wealthier sisters; rather is the contrary true. If an artist wants a bonny baby to paint, does he not go to the peasantry to seek it? I am not sure that some of the suburban babies would not in these later times

run the peasant babies hard, though a good many of the suburban mammas have done their share of work, and some of them work still, and find the wherewithal to keep the babies soft and dainty.

If a woman works and is sickly, every one tries to make out that she would not have been sickly if she had sat idle, which by no means follows. It will be a good day for the world when there are no more sickly women, but I think that we shall have to cease lamenting over the work that must be done, in order to devote our whole strength to the solution of the difficulties that cluster round girls' heritage and girls' education.

I intend to devote this first chapter to a consideration of health, how we may obtain it or retain it by mental and physical education. I do not say anything about inheritance, which does not mean that I do not think anything, or that there is nothing to say. But I do think that to talk much about inherited causes of failure when the person who is likely to fail is sitting before us is a sure way to make the cause come into certain effect. Take away hope, and no hope remains. Suppose that what has often hap-

pened, happens again : a mother brings a sickly child to me, asking my advice in educating it. I look at mother and child, listen to her story, and think within myself that, so far as I can see, it were better for the world if the child had never been born. But what is the use of saying so? The most savage reformer of the birth-rate cannot propose to put the child out of the way. I keep my thoughts to myself, and insist that training can do miracles in the matter of health; that, after all, inheritance is an unknown quantity, training a living power; that in a world like ours there is room for everybody, provided only she be good of a kind. Often the miracle works. It is wise in such cases to forget the things that are behind, and to press forward. As has been said, the one thing we can be certain of bequeathing to our children, if we have children, is our health; and it is a bequest we can scarcely think too seriously about in connection with the future; but it seldom does any good to ponder over bequests in our reminiscences of the past. Heredity is a subject I discuss with mothers, but not with girls, nor before them, unless we are having a grave

and confidential talk about the future responsibilities of motherhood, and that is not now. We are too apt to think of heredity only in connection with what we have inherited; we wish our inheritance were more or otherwise; and so wishing, we can devise lovely excuses for all that we do or leave undone. But we ought rather to think of heredity in connection with what we shall bequeath, searching for a guide towards wisdom, and not for an excuse in foolishness. The truth about heredity works for good if it increases our sense of responsibility for the people or the times that come after us; but it works for harm when it increases our natural tendency to waste our time lamenting over what cannot be altered.

"I shall never do anything; I know I sha'n't," said a girl to me the other day. "None of mother's people, or father's either, ever have done anything. And of course I shall be like the rest. I may as well make up my mind to it."

And it takes a wiser woman than I am to say how much of her failure (which I also surely reckon upon, seeing how things are)

will be due to inheritance, and how much to the paralysing effect of her own belief in coercive force for evil.

We turn a hopeful face towards the girl's future, knowing that every inheritance may be used or squandered; and that in health as well as in money a man may inherit a fortune and die a beggar, or inherit debts and pay them off. The world is changing, but perfect health will be always, as it is now, among the best of a woman's possessions; and whatever the world in its changes robs her and us of, health, good or bad, will remain. I do not deny that pluck and endurance can do wonders, and that many a woman has done marvels in spite of ailing health. But bad health must always be a disqualification for a woman's best work, and indeed for any work it is the commonest cause of failure. And as things now are, every woman who fails makes it harder for the rest to succeed.

Some persons still think that women were meant to be ailing. They profess to believe in an all-powerful and all-wise Creator, Who, in spite of His wisdom and power, made good working machines for only one half of humanity.

They hug themselves when they are incapable through illness, and fancy that they are in some sort of way better fulfilling their mission because they are too feeble to grapple with it. They find no topic of conversation so interesting as the complaints they perpetually make. And so far from being ashamed of their own unserviceable lives, they seek further to waste the time of able-bodied listeners.

Therefore I think that among the first rules of health I would teach to girls this: they have no birthright to be ill. Their machine was meant to run, not to stick fast. If it does stick, it is probably because they have not used it reasonably, so that they have to be ashamed of their ignorance, rather than proud of their feelings. Anyway, supposing the machine to be defective, that reflects the reverse of glory upon one's family, and is best kept silence about; meanwhile, a great deal may be done in early life to get even a poor machine into good going gear; and as one can't do anything in the world except by means of one's body, such as it is, the wise thing is to take it for what it is worth, and quietly to make the best of it.

Whatever the girls do in the world, in what-



ever way they intend to impress themselves upon their generation (and most young persons start on life with large intentions), it is their body they must use to do it with. It is no good cultivating a fine soul if it is never able to use its only instrument of expression. The body that they make for themselves now that they are young they will keep all their lives long. And it depends upon them and upon you whether it shall be an obedient servant or a tyrannical master.

Every human being does work of two different kinds. First of all, we must do the work of living. The body as a whole, and in every part, goes on working, and when it ceases to work it ceases to live. But we cannot spare any conscious mental power for this work of living, which ought to go on automatically, unconsciously, as a matter of course. Directly there is pain in working, or even consciousness of the work done, there is something wrong.

And another early lesson I would impress on girls is this : not to get into the habit of thinking about, or of talking about, their bodies or their bodily sensations. There are more good things in the world than time to talk about

them in. Of course, when one does think about it, one's body is very wonderful, and often a very strange and perplexing companion, especially during the years when it is growing and altering fast, and before one has had time to get accustomed to all its ways. But it is also a wayward companion, apt to encroach; the more you pay attention to it, the more it wants to be paid attention to. And if you let it get into the way of fancying that it cannot do this, and does not want to do that, you will presently find that it will not readily do anything that you wish it to do. Of course it is of no use neglecting your body, any more than it would be of any use to neglect any other live thing that you wanted to get good work out of. Give it proper food, and air, and sleep, keep it clean, and set it to work. Many a woman's body would grumble less if it had found from the beginning that unreasonable grumbling was not attended to.

This work of living is a personal matter that must be accomplished; but it is useless to society. On the contrary, in the work of living we destroy valuable material which somebody else would be very glad to have if we did not

take it. We can't live at all without using up food and raiment, and of food and raiment there is always a limited supply in the world, so that many persons have to go insufficiently clad, and to bite short.

We shall agree that it is the poorest economy to go underfed or underclad. But it is wise to remind ourselves that what society wants of each one of us is to destroy only just so much food and raiment as will enable each one of us to do the best work for the world of which he or she, individually, is capable. The work of life is to leave the world better than we found it. And I suppose that all serious minded persons, however much they may differ from me on minor points, will agree in accepting this fundamental statement respecting the work of life : every man or woman is bound to give to the world at least as much as he or she takes from it ; to do some sort of work, physical, mental, or spiritual, that shall be worth to the world at least as much as the food and raiment destroyed during life.

Any one can see that the most profitable machine is the one that does the greatest amount of the best work with the least cost of fuel. It is a body like such a machine that we

want to make for our girl. There are badly constructed machines, as every housekeeper knows, that use a lot of fuel of an expensive sort, though out of them very little service can be got. There are also well constructed machines so badly managed that a great deal of fuel is wasted, and yet the results are scanty. And there are human bodies that correspond pretty accurately to both these sorts of machines.

And I think that in the present state of society it is very profitable to remember this during the physical training of girls. Girls of the middle and upper classes are very expensive machines to keep going. They require large supplies of costly fuel. But if, in consequence, they can do better work or more work, or even other work than the less expensive human machines, they are not only safe in their present position, but they are well worth having to the community. For the highest work, and for the best workers, there is always a keen demand. But if, consuming more, they produce less; if they cost more, and yet are not worth more to the community, they are not safe in their present position. When they come into

the open market, no one will buy them. And I am glad to know that they are beginning to be aware of the fact.

Mothers often air their grievances about Board Schools and the rise of workman's wages, and to hear them talk one might think that a Board School education, *plus* a father who earned £1 a week, equalled the sum total of all the advantages that wealth and hereditary training can bestow on a child. But the grain of truth that seasons their complaints is this: they see that in many cases their children are driven to compete for work by the side of the children of the poor; that both often do the same sorts of work, the same amount of work, and up to the same standard of excellence. And wherever that is the case, it shows that the costly upbringing of their children was not economically justifiable. Wherever that is the case, the children of the poor must win, because they are happy and healthy on less pay.

Take notice that the whole question hinges on the continued possession of health, using the word in its broadest sense. We all know that some poor children suffer in health through their poverty, and that many workers would do

better work if they had more clothes and better food and less work. But there is a point somewhere (though it is confessedly hard to lay an exact finger upon it) where the highest efficiency is reached, so that any more fuel heaped on chokes the fire instead of making it burn brighter. I said above that we must keep the body warm and clean, give it food, and then set it to work. The problem that lies before well-to-do mothers is how to give their children enough yet not too much: how to provide all necessities for the development of their daughters' highest capacities, and yet to allow no luxuries that shall hinder them in after life. To strike the happy mean is always and everywhere the difficult accomplishment.

Some girls are taught that their bodies are the chief thing in the universe; to be coddled and humoured; never to fast from what they could eat; never to work when they are tired; never to feel a breath of biting cold, nor a ray of scorching sun. And others are brought up in the belief that bodies (more especially the bodies of young people) are vile, useless things, to be thwarted and punished as a matter of daily routine. No doubt the contradictory

plan is out of favour just now ; we had a spell of it some generations ago, and our contemporaries have flown off at a tangent. The cockering plan is in the highest fashion, so that I must struggle against its results in half the girls that come to me to talk about their work. It seems quite a new idea to them when I point out that half the work of the world would come to a standstill if nothing were ever done against the grain. If no man had ever stood and worked in the sun or the snow after his skin had begun to smart and his back to ache, the world would be a wilderness to-day, and we savages. Who are these girls that they should inherit the work of all the ages, and yet try to shake themselves free of the laws that govern the work of every life ?

If you want your body to be a useful servant you must early accustom it to obey, and to obey promptly. It is by struggling against ourselves and our environment that we grow strong. When you cease to struggle against yourself and your environment, you cease to grow ; and when growth ceases death begins. The struggle is life. It is death to get away from it. It is a silly thing to shut one's eyes

to this truth, and to imagine that this universal obligation to struggle has been or can be lifted off the shoulders of a few thousand members of one sex. I often meet people who talk about their daughters being shielded and guarded, and kept out of the world, as if they with their feeble hands could beat back the Everlasting. The girl who is held forcibly out of the struggle for life, though with the best intentions, cannot develop any more, and she begins to dwindle. You do not want her any bigger? You would rather have her as she is, or even dwindled from what she is? You are holding her back with conscious intent? That is the argument I often meet. And I retort that beggars, for their own profit, would often rather have a crippled child than a fully developed one; it suits their mode of life better, they tell us. But they have not even a legal right to bind the children's limbs up; and if the legal right were theirs the moral right would be wanting. People have a distorted idea of what *struggle* in this connection means, and they attach it some vague way to the notion of fighting and strife in the home. Exercise is a form of struggle; work is another form. To move is a struggle. All that I ask



for girls is that they may have room to move, and a chance of exercising their powers of mind and body. The fault that I find with the upbringing of girls of the well-to-do classes is that they have never had room to move, either their minds or their bodies. And so their minds grow feeble and their bodies disobedient. There is no shame in suffering the disadvantages of poverty. But, to my mind, it is a shame to us well-to-do women when we squander our natural advantages, and buy with our money disadvantages, from which, in the nature of things, the children of the poor are free. Chief among these disadvantages is the exemption from all forms of struggle. Life comes too easily to the children of the well-to-do. They read in an old book about "enduring hardship," but they cannot have an idea what it means. Perhaps they put it among sayings true only in Eastern countries; perhaps they believe that hardship is among the obsolete things that modern science and enlightenment have undone the necessity for. Meanwhile, they often grow downwards while the poorer children, enduring hardship, grow upwards; and presently the two come to meet,

or so nearly to meet that you tremble for the result.

“But I must make life pleasant and happy for my girls now they are young,” so many mothers say to me. “Perhaps it won’t be so pleasant when they are older.” They would speak truer if they left out the *perhaps*. Life will not be pleasant at all, for it is a truism to say that unless you fly pleasure it will not follow you. All the wise men have said that, and a great many foolish ones have repeated the saying, until at last, maybe, we are tired of hearing. But our weariness does not make truth less true. There are many recipes for getting happiness, but yours is not one of them. Make the girl healthy; to live all one’s life with a willing servant instead of a tyrannical master, makes a good deal of difference to happiness even if it does not insure it. Make the girl busy; there is a good deal of pleasure to be got out of exercising one’s faculties in any direction. Make the girl useful; half a woman’s unhappiness comes from the belief that no one wants her, as wife or spinster. And last of all, don’t take for yourself nor give to her the frequent opportunity of sitting down to think whether she is

pleased. It is not a matter of the first importance either way. To enjoy life is a blessing rather than a duty, and it is a blessing often showered upon us, often withheld from us, in consequence of things that happened before we were born. I have heard it said that if any one sits down to think about bodily pain, it will not be long before he has a pain, little or big, somewhere. Certain it is, that when we sit down to think whether we are quite happy, we generally find out that we are not. Whereas if we had gone on doing what lay ready to hand, not thinking whether we liked doing it, but just because it was there to be done, we should have had some pleasure out of our work, a little more from our conscience, a third portion out of well-earned rest ; and presently, sleeping, should have forgotten all about ourselves, and should have awakened next morning stronger in mind and body, and less at the mercy of any outside causes of misery. And as years go on we see how true is the old saw : It takes much longer to wear out than to rust out.

Am I wandering off from my subject ? I think not. For all we who have any experience as advisers of girls know that half the well-

to-do girls who fall ill are suffering from *cramp*, mental or physical. They want some different sort of movement, and space to move in. They want change; not the accustomed change of a week or two at the seaside, or a month or two of visits, but a change of the conditions of daily life. Manifestly, the conditions under which they have hitherto lived have not suited them, for people who live under perfect conditions never fall ill unless they have some disease; and these girls, as a rule, have none, though it would be rash to say that they will not develop a disease with a long name to it if they are forcibly held under conditions that do not fit them. They may fit other women; they may even fit the large majority; that is not the point; they do not fit this one particular girl, for if they did you would not have brought her to me, ailing as she now is.

I have found that the mothers of these ailing daughters may easily be divided into two classes. Half of them think that their daughters are all body, and that they can have none but purely material wants. They tell me that the girls have abundant food, a beautiful home, pretty dresses galore, and pocket-money at

their desire. And when their father dies they will have an income. They went to Switzerland last year. They were in London in the spring. What more can a girl want? Talk about change indeed! Any change must be for the worse. Something to think about, and to look forward to? Girls shouldn't think too hard; all this new-fangled education is a mistake; or only reasonable for the poor things who have no money. If half that we hear is true, it takes a very successful woman to make the income that their father spends ungrudgingly on each one of these children. Look forward? Time will come when the old folks die, and then the young folks will have their own money, and can make ducks and drakes of it as they please. But surely I can't mean that these girls are so hard-hearted as to look forward to *that*!

Indeed I mean nothing of the kind. At most I take leave to point out that if the girls are all body—and possibly though they are not—they would much prefer to be married, after what is, without doubt, the plan of nature untrammelled. They are too well brought up to acknowledge it, even to themselves, but the fact remains.

There is nothing to be ashamed of nor to wonder at. We talk so much nonsense and sense about inheritance; we all have an excellent chance of inheriting a preference for matrimony. And when one comes to think about it, most middle class girls are trained to physical perfection. If there is a fault, it is that they are over-fed, their senses and emotions over-stimulated. That is not the way to hold down the bodily appetites, as familiar old-world wisdom could have told you. I do not say that you should hold them down; that is another question. But I do say that if you do your best to make a girl all body, you should consider all her body, and make provision accordingly.

Then there are mothers who love to imagine that their daughters are all mind. They provide their girls with a good education and intellectual companions of mature age and well-seasoned views, with plenty of books and concert tickets, and even with a career. And yet the girls are pale and listless and anæmic, and some humble or learned professor is asked to advise. Mathematics are dry feeding for the heart. They may never have talked about it, but it is pretty cer-

tain that these girls, intellectual though they are, have dreamed girls' dreams. They have followed their mother's lead in all docility since they were babies; can they do better than seek to follow it now, and take a husband, and guide a home, and bring up children as she did? And now dreaming time is over, and waking time is come, and the hard common sense in which they have been brought up forces them to see that the husband and the children will never belong to them. Between ourselves, I dare say they would not have been half as happy married as single; but then I have always preached that we were not sent into the world to be happy; and anyway, it is no good telling them so now. They have a hard strip of life to get over, and it is cruel to make it harder by pretending that they have thought or done anything of which they ought to be ashamed. For my part I think the better of them and not the worse. Presently, I do not doubt it for a moment, they will come out safe and sound on the other side, and will do better work than other women because they understand more.

And meanwhile? Space, work, new interests, a fresh channel opened out for the diversion of

unused mental and physical energy. Whatever they have had and done hitherto, let them have and do something else now. In a year or two they will have settled down. For that year or two keep them fully employed. If they have not already a career, set them rolling on one, though not for the sake of the money, yet for the sake of themselves. Let them live their lives after the fashion of their age. It is an absorbing occupation, and a very wholesome one. And do not forget that there are hard lessons to learn at every stage of life's progress; and that when daughters have come to middle age, parents have come to the age when it is natural to step just a little way into the background. Each one of us who lives long enough (and why do we study our health if not because we wish to die of old age?) reaches the prime of life, and still goes on, past it. If your daughter, now between thirty and forty years of age, is not fit to manage the common affairs of her life, it must be because she was badly brought up. Knowing her parents, I feel it impossible that she could have inherited so plentiful a lack of judgment.



Do not pick up the slang phrase and talk about revolt! Perhaps you revolt in your heart against the ordinances of nature, and the dictates of common sense. Things are altered since you and I were young, but all the alteration is not in the daughters. When we were young, women of our age would have thought it unbecoming to get themselves up in imitation of their own daughters, and it was not then the fashion for middle-aged mothers to pursue the amusements of girlhood. When we got old in the old days, every one let us see that they knew it; and I dare say they know it now, though they do say with a bow and a smile that we are younger and more interesting than any of the girls. Such compliments sound pretty, even if they are not true, and we must take things as we find them, the good and the bad together.

I must step back a page or two to pick up a large bone of contention, which I purposely left lying on one side. Girls' health is generally discussed in connection with, or in opposition to, "the higher education of women." I have always thought that the remarkably tall, fine-grown young women whom one sees walking in

the suburbs of our large towns offer a sufficient proof that the average girl has not led upon the whole an unhealthy life. My acquaintance with them does not enable me to say that their education is astoundingly "high," when one takes them in the lump. But still they have most of them been to a day school, and they have more book-learning, as well as more inches, than their mothers and grandmothers had. When from the lump one picks out individuals, one perceives the close analogy between mental and material food. To swallow is but the beginning of the process: afterwards comes digestion, and assimilation. A perfectly healthy child, well brought up, does not want any pressing to eat as much as it can comfortably digest. But it may be, and often is, pressed to eat more than is good for it by a fond parent, who observes that other children have a larger appetite, and is very anxious to see it grow big. And then it either obeys, and swallows too much, and gets a fit of indigestion; or it rebels, and then at feeding time there is strife—a peculiarly indigestible sauce!

A perfectly healthy schoolgirl, having well prepared and selected mental food placed before

her, takes in as much as she can assimilate, and leaves the rest. A good deal is left, one gathers. And the power of mental digestion varies enormously. Sometimes pressure is put on to make the child absorb more, and then, though no more was swallowed than the child next door could do with comfortably, there is a fit of mental indigestion. It is a complaint of the period, common at all ages. And a short spell of mental starvation is the only remedy. No more books, whether story-books, or lesson-books; no more sitting to think, on a lounge or on a school bench. Now is the moment, which perhaps never will come again, for learning to do things and to know things which do not lie within the cover of any book. But what more I have to say about school and home work will come better in the next chapters.

## CHAPTER II

### GIRLS' SCHOOLS

“A man that hath travelled knoweth many things, and he that hath much experience will declare wisdom. He that hath no experience knoweth little, but he that hath travelled is full of prudence. When I travelled I saw much.”

TRAINING for the work of life is of two sorts. We all have to do work in general, and we all have a general training of character, habit and intelligence, preparing us for life more or less well, as the case may be. And some of us have to do special work, for which we have to be specially trained.

It is the general training of habit and intelligence that comes first, and of which I am going to speak here, especially of that part of general training that comes with schooling, or school instruction. I purposely write “schooling” and “instruction,” because I do not wish, even by a

chance word, to lend any countenance to that loose and inaccurate habit of thought and speech that leads us to speak sometimes of education as if it were the same thing as learning lessons out of a book, or as if it were only while the girls sit in the schoolroom that their characters are being formed. That is the reverse of the truth. Measured by any standard, there is more of what a child learns out of school than of what she is taught in it. But then, on the other hand, we must not forget that a child is not put under instruction merely in order that she may learn "the three Rs" in fewer or more of their many developments; she is also trained in habits of body and mind. And the habits are of far more consequence than the learning. Every one will agree that the school is not necessarily the best which turns out the most scholars; the best school is that which makes its pupils most diligent, most hard-working, most faithful in the daily affairs of life; most greedy of knowledge and most capable of gathering it; least greedy of material reward. If we could say for certain which school could do this, we should have settled once and for all between home tuition and

school life; between English and foreign schools; between classics and science.

Not that I wish to undervalue schooling. I think that the choice of the mode of instruction is worth far more time and care than is generally bestowed upon it. But I am nevertheless sure that it is home and not school influence that is supreme in the formation of character. We must all notice how "the family ways" stick to all the girls, though perhaps each one of them went to a different school. And a wise organiser, choosing her subordinates, always asks first what home a girl came out of, and afterwards what school she went to.

But when there are so many things that we must spend our strength in coming to an individual determination about, it does seem a great waste, at this time of day, to lament and fidget because we must put the girls under instruction of some kind. That matter is settled for us by law. There is still a wide latitude for choice. For while girls of the poorer classes must attend a school under Government inspection, up to a certain standard of excellence, girls of the wealthier classes have such instruction as their parents choose to pro-

vide for them, which may be good, even the best that the world contains, but may also be, and indeed often is, inferior to the instruction provided free by the State.

Let me repeat that schooling, good, bad, or indifferent, must be considered as part of general training, and not as special training, fitting for professional work. This very simple proposition needs to be impressed upon parents who passed their growing time before schooling was compulsory. Nothing is commoner, when I ask what special training a girl has to fit her for earning, than to hear "Oh! she's had a first-rate education: she went to an excellent school for six years." You may say that of every girl you meet in the street. And often I am asked to recommend a school out of which when the girl shall come she is to be able to earn her living for ever after.

Ordinary schooling is a drug in the labour market. It is one of the things one buys to have, and not to sell again. It is true that schooling more or less *extraordinary* does fit a girl for one profession—that of the school-teacher. Moreover, it is certain that such advantages as mere schooling gives are becom-

ing less valuable as schooling becomes more common. When few men could read and write, he who could do both was in constant employment. But to write a fair hand and to read print fluently are powers that now confer no value on their possessor, because every man in the street can do as much. Time was when an ordinarily good education was so seldom given to girls that almost any one who had been to school could earn some sort of living as private governess. All that is now happily changed. Custom, though not yet law, ordains that a teacher must have some certificates, and to gain any certificates worth speaking of, some teaching is needed beyond the ordinary curriculum that every schoolgirl follows.

I wish I could say that it is ordained by universal custom that every private governess must show herself fit for the duties she undertakes. Most women can tell extraordinary tales of the incapacity of the governesses to whom was entrusted their early education; they were alike unfit to form a character and to inform a mind. And sometimes for the sake of saving money, at other times for other reasons, work is still given to governesses whose chief



qualification is that they are unfit to do anything else. In my opinion, an untrained resident governess gives the worst of all instruction, unless it may be that given by an equally incompetent elder sister. For a governess has at least other ways, though it may be no better ways, than those of the family; and so, untrained though she is, she is rather more likely than the sister to increase her pupils' capacity.

A thoroughly competent governess, and there are some such, may be the best teacher for young children; sometimes I am inclined to think that she is; but I have never known any good come of bringing up elder girls at home under the charge of one and the same woman in and out of lessons, of one and the same teacher for all subjects. No woman or man is good all round, nor up to a high level of capacity at every hour of the day. And just as children fail in bodily health unless the food for their bodies is varied, so they will inevitably be stunted in mental growth if mental food is presented day after day in the same aspect and with the same flavour.

It is the fashion in some classes of society to bring all girls up at home under a resident

governess. It is not in those classes that you find girls who can work. Neither society nor their parents demand work of them, and they are carefully trained to be content in idleness. Every one who has wide experience in the different types of girl of this period knows that the wealthy and fashionable young woman brought up at home under a governess is neither well taught nor teachable. It is very hard to get a new idea into her head, and it is impossible to get her own ideas out in a readable form on paper. Possibly she may know many things that are unknown to her suburban sister; that is another matter. But she has not been trained to work, which is our present subject. And her governess, even granted that she fits her for the life she has to live, is an unfit instructress for girls who have to be trained early to work.

And so we come to consider day-schools, far and away the most usual mode of instruction for boys and girls, and, considering their average excellence, much the cheapest. But here, perhaps, more than at any other time, one has to insist again that the school fees are paid for a part of the general training, and not for the

whole of it. That girls are trained all round as well as instructed at the good day-schools, no one will be inclined to deny; in fact the remark as it stands begs the question, for if the whole training were not good, the school would not be good either. But every day the children are in school for six hours, out of school for eighteen; or, reckoning by weeks instead of days, they are under their teachers' charge for thirty hours, under their parents' charge for one hundred and thirty-eight hours. It is by persistent effort, not by vacillating desire, that we make our marks, and it tells much for the teachers' skill and patience that their influence is what it is. But remembering the facts, how foolish it is to lay at the school door the blame of everything that goes wrong! How unreasonable it is to think that if the school bills are paid, nothing more need be done to train the girls for work!

Strict discipline and good order are kept on the school premises. If outside the school door, and especially inside the door of home, there is no discipline, no rule nor order, the girl is driven to think that school work is the only work that must be done with punctuality and

diligence. That idea, once rooted in the mind, is a real, though often unrecognised hindrance in after life. So that in that way the very excellence of the school training, by reason of the slackness of the home rule, may become an occasion of stumbling.

We should get much better results if parents would see that their own province is well governed before they begin to interfere in the province that they have given over to the teacher, presumably because she knows more about it than they do themselves. Mothers, and especially mothers who had no efficient instruction in their own youth, and who consequently do not know what persistent head-work means, are apt to exaggerate the amount of work that school children actually do, and to underrate the amount that a well-taught child can do. The reward of good teaching is to be able to teach more. And then, with a mistaken notion that the way to rest is to do nothing, they allow, or even encourage, girls to loaf and idle about as soon as the school task is accomplished. Girls lounge first in one chair and then in another, and at the day's end have nothing to show

for their day's work except their stint of lessons, and perhaps a few pages read or half read of current fiction. If they have played a game for an hour, or walked a few miles on a profitless errand, they feel as if they had done everything that the most censorious could demand of them. And when they leave school, it is without an idea of setting themselves a task; all their tasks must be set them.

As far as good day-schooling goes, the Board School children have even the same. Your daughter is to be trained for work: would you like her to compete for work in the open market, beside all the Board School children in the land? Because they are all eligible for all posts where the only qualification needed is the ordinary day-school instruction.

"Ah! but my daughter does not belong to the same order of womanhood as the average Board School girl!" you indignantly exclaim. "She has some culture, and refined habits of speech and behaviour. And, even in these democratic days, it is worth something to come of a good family."

Exactly so. What your daughter can offer

as a marketable commodity is not what she knows, but what she is; not her learning so much as her culture; not what she is able to say and do, but how she can say and do it. It is character and individuality that tell out in the race of life, and that will tell every year more so long as the world progresses on its present lines. And, therefore, it is foolish to lay the girls' failure to the score of poverty during their school days. This I say for the comfort of mothers and girls who seem to be hampered by want of means and of opportunities. It is not knowing this or that, it is not having lessons in this or that subject, that ensures a girl's success. It may be all very well to have the lessons, but you need not fail because you have them not. Some girls succeed who have had almost no teaching; others fail who have had what we are pleased to call "every advantage." Character and personality have nothing to do with £ s. d., except that they are worth £ s. d. in the open market; few things are worth so much. And culture runs in families; it is not kept with the banker's account. And if you cannot cultivate a strong character in your daughter now

you are poor and must send her to a cheap school, you certainly would not do it if you were rich and could send her to an expensive one; the chances are that rich the girl would be worse off, because she would then escape the hard pressure of circumstance and necessity which is now apt to force her into the way she should go.

“Character has nothing to do with instruction, nor with education; it is born in some children and not in others.”

So I hear some one saying; but, like all the common sayings on the vexed question of heredity, it is only a part of the truth, and it is often misused as a cloak for laziness; which quality also may be inherited from an unknown ancestor, as well as cultivated in children and imitated from parents.

But we are talking about cheap schools and the cheapest schools. If heredity stands for so much, then your children, even if you sent them to a Board School, would have a long start before the other children. Why should you fear for the result when all are set to run the same race? Are not your children bound to win? In sober truth they ought to be.

And if it does not turn out that they in the main win; if, having had privileges, they are no better than the children who had no privileges, we are on the horns of a curious dilemma: either inheritance counts for nought, or else all inherited advantages are swamped by the bad effects of our everyday (luxurious?) mode of life.

But the choice for our girls is not between Board Schools and High Schools; it is rather between day-school and boarding-school. Comparing the education of poor girls with that of rich girls, one is compelled to acknowledge that in one point the poorer girls often have the advantage. They are obliged to go out into the world and to find their level among strangers before their characters are set fast. I do not say that they always go out in the best way, or in a way that we should imitate, but they do go out somehow; whereas our girls often grow up to woman's estate tied to their mother's apron-string, always a serious and sometimes a fatal mistake. A girl ought to go away from home, at any rate for a time, during her school life. A child at home cannot learn to accommodate herself to the ways of strangers, and



until she learns that lesson she will never get on in the world. Man is a social animal, and in order to succeed he must be able to fit himself into a highly civilised society. If a man does not get on, and has, as a boy, never been sent to school, we think the one fact sufficiently explains the other. It is acknowledged that certain posts are seldom adequately filled except by public school and university men; no one would dream of bestowing them on a home-bred lad, nor even on one who had spent his time between a day-school and his home. It is not a case of learning; the home-bred lad might know as much, or even more; but he wouldn't have had his "corners rubbed off"; his corners stick out awkwardly from various parts of his conduct; and his opinion of men and things would probably be out of all proportion.

Most persons who have had any experience in dealing with women and girls will agree that home-bred women labour under great disadvantages. They may be well-meaning individuals, but they are indifferent citizens. They have no sense of proportion, especially of their own proportion to the world's bulk. They have

never taken their own measure, because to measure you must have a standard of measurement, and they have never been out in the world to get a new one, or to correct that worn down by family use. They know neither their own powers nor their own limitations. They are apt to think that their own taste, or at least the family verdict, is a final judgment upon all things in heaven and earth. And having thought the family verdict infallible, if they find it wrong in one particular they straight-way jump to the conclusion that there's no such thing as truth in the universe. They see all society out of focus, because they have never had a clear view of themselves through other people's eyes. They have never had a chance of finding their own level; and until one has found it, with some approach to accuracy, it is impossible to do good work in the world.

The drawback of women's lives is that they are so very narrow. At home they associate only with friends of their own set, generally neighbours, who keep the same hours and the same number of servants, wear the same clothes, eat the same food, go for the same holidays, attend the same place of worship, and

speak the same language with the same accent. How can they relegate their own class to its proper place in the world's economy? In many ways town life is far narrower than country life; and many of us think that it is not merely for physical reasons that children brought up in the country generally do better in after-life than those who pass their childhood in town. In the country every child has the habit of going into a few big houses, and some little houses, and a great many cottages, so that it is difficult for her to grow up imagining the world to be made as a playground or a work-room for any one class of society. And the duty to one's neighbour is apt in the country to be flung into even a child's life.

Let boarding-school be what it may, it must be otherwise than home; and therein, to my mind, lies its unalterable merit. There must be some mixture of classes; the more the better. If a girl learns to look on her rich schoolmates without envy, and on her poor schoolmates without scorn, she has at least learned something good that will stick by her. And at a foreign school, the language, the ordering of daily life, the food, the outward

form of religion, the circumstances, all are different to what the girl is accustomed to, and she must be more than average stupid if she does not widen her mind, if she is able afterwards to think that she is to be judge, jury and advocate in every cause that turns up in the turmoil of life.

So far from dreading boarding-school life, I think it an excellent plan that girls should take their first swim in the stormy waters of life while yet a loving hand in the old home holds them on a strong rope. I think it cruel to keep girls at home, and to let them know nothing of the world until they are tossed into it alone to sink or swim. Because the usages of society make it difficult for a girl after school-life is over to find her level among her mates, I consider it all the more necessary that she should have a chance of finding it while school-life continues. Experience forces me to see that the most successful women, the best "all round" women I have known, almost without exception, have been those who have been sent to a foreign school, or who have travelled in a foreign country in their teens; and I do not know more than one or two

successful women who have spent their time in travelling to and fro between a day-school and their home, passing their youth with their nose within the pages of a book. I decline to believe that my experience is accidental or peculiar. Of course I know that, in the days of my own girlhood, there were many good foreign schools, and few good English ones, and that English schools are now very much better than they were. Let that count for all it is worth in the case of my contemporaries. But I am not sure whether the average school is not even now better in those countries where teaching may never be a refuge for the incompetent destitute, as it is still too often in England. The management of private boarding-schools by Englishwomen, whether in England or on the Continent, leaves much to be desired. But a large number of foreign boarding-schools for girls are under strict public supervision, so that gross abuses cannot exist; and English parents who are unable to exercise intelligent choice in the matter, are fairly safe in entrusting their girl to one of these.

“ You send a girl all that long way off, and

you don't know what will become of her!" But it is only a day's post off, and a girl who has been well brought up has learned to place implicit confidence in her mother, and will do nothing of any importance without writing home. And a mother who, in all the years of childhood, has not been able to teach that first lesson to her daughter, is certainly one of the women who, whatever her good intentions and even good qualities, is unfit to rule. The girl has learned by experience that in a critical moment she cannot depend upon getting reliable advice; she has learned that it often turns out just as well when she follows her own advice as when she takes her mother's opinion. Worst of all, she may have found out that when her mother advises her wrongly—and the best of us may err—the mother won't cry *Peccavi*, and the girl is left to bear the blame and the penalty. We all know mothers of that stamp, not bad women, but weak—unfit to bear rule. Who shall say that their girls are not the better for developing, as early as may be, a power of standing on their own feet? A free country is good to live in; a wise despotism, in certain stages of progress, is better; but a

weak tyrant, a vacillating autocrat, brings good to no single subject, and the English-speaking races have agreed that the sooner such a rule is shaken off the better for all concerned.

People often say to me, "Then you don't agree that it is a bad thing to send girls abroad to a school that the mother knows next to nothing of? For my part I think much harm is done in sending girls out of sight, to learn nobody knows what."

. They forget that the choice is never between a wise and careful mother and a school that nobody knows anything about; but between the said school and a mother capable of choosing it out of all the schools that there are in all countries. A woman who does not take the trouble, or has not the wisdom to choose a good school for a girl, is not likely to choose the good and reject the evil in other much more complicated events of a girl's life. For my part, I have known many well-meaning women to select a school in a quite idiotic fashion; they would often take more trouble and display more judgment in choosing a new dress. But well-meaning does not always include wise-doing; and looking back on life, and

considering what these mothers were, I am certainly of opinion that the girls had a better chance at a haphazard school than they would have had if they had lived on under an unchanging and unwise rule at home. A great deal is said about the harm that girls may learn at school. Do not let us forget that schoolgirls, both at home and abroad, are often silly beyond description, but that they have neither the temptation nor the chance to do anything worse than silly. Boarding-school mistresses seem also to have a surprising faculty for silliness of behaviour; perhaps they catch it of generations of girls. But, mercifully for all of us who have been young, the results of pure silliness do not last; except in the rarest cases, when I can but repeat what I said before, that if a girl is sent to one of the few very bad schools that exist, one knows what sort of a home she was sent out of, and one must take that into account before delivering final judgment on the case. One does hear occasionally of that worst of all failures in education, of a girl who "goes wrong." But it is absurd to mix that sort of thing up with the girls' boarding-school question. Without ex-



ception, all of the very few middle-class girls whose wrong-doing has come to my knowledge, have been brought up at home, tied to a silly mother's apron-string, and allowed to loaf about, under no discipline for mind or body.

I am quite ready to believe that in former times, when most girls married, and when all girls lived a home life, the need for education outside the home was less pressing. Many girls don't marry now, and those who do marry often marry late in life. If we were quite sure that as soon as a girl was old enough she would have a home of her own, and room to expand naturally, I might take another view.

But I write for things as I see them, not as they used to be before my time, nor as they may be in an unknown future. A lot of girls of different ages growing up at home must seek, not how they can expand their powers and use them, but how they can repress their powers, and take as little as may be of the limited space. It is not according to nature, and the retribution is certain. Half the girls I see failing were not born deficient, but let to grow stunted. And a girl who has to work

needs all her powers, and will not find life child's play even so.

And so, looking round me, and judging as far as I am able from results, I pronounce in favour of many teachers rather than one; of almost any school rather than home lessons; of day-school and a governess rather than day-school and to run wild; but of day-school without a governess rather than the governess without the school; and of a foreign boarding school rather than an English one.

I have purposely left the question of cost to the end. For if we are poor our girls must be trained to earn, and whatever else they go without, they must be well taught. It is the poorest economy to keep a cheap governess for portionless daughters; what can you expect but to make them into cheaper governesses in their turn? If you are rich, there is just this comfort, that an ignorant woman with money in her pocket need never go in for the practical examination of life. If foreign schools have no other advantage, they are at least cheap. Englishwomen who set up foreign schools for their countrywomen often charge English prices, and English parents, who have more

money than wit, pay them. But then I should rarely send a girl to a school kept by an Englishwoman on the Continent, though I do not doubt that there are many good schools of that sort. I want the girls to know other ways, to learn to eat wholesome food of whatever nationality; and, since they have to earn a living, I want them to see that other women are happy and good and healthy and useful without half the luxuries that they with their insular up-bringing have mistaken for necessities. It is not only that foreign school-bills are shorter; it is that a girl who has been to a foreign school is, when she comes back, a less costly machine to keep going. I hear a great deal about the moral evils of English boarding-schools. In my experience I have come across nothing so bad as this training of girls in wealth-worship and luxury. It is bad enough. But as to grave moral evils of another kind, I think there is a great deal of misapprehension. Fathers look back on their own schooldays, and know what boys are; and they don't know, and won't believe, that girls are merely silly and ignorant. And the schoolmistresses are old maids who

make mountains out of molehills, and who often do not seem to have got firmly hold of the fact that there is going to be a next generation as well as this present one. Of course the girls talk about lovers; I would not for worlds tell them so, but is that so very wicked? It depends upon what they say. Occasionally a boy at school over the way sends a message, or a letter, or even a lock of his sandy hair, to one of his sister's schoolfellows. Of course he should not do it, and of course she should have brought the packet at once to the schoolmistress to be consigned to the flames. But does any sensible man or woman expect the children to indulge in severe heroism of that sort? It is very naughty and tiresome, and one can't let it go on. But you might as well say that a boarding-school was entirely unsanitary because a few of the girls took the measles. One of the elder girls has a sister married during the holidays; of course she tells to a circle of eager listeners all that the young people did and said and looked. Why not? One need not ask whether your girl's sister behaved quite nicely, and married a real good fellow. What

conduct can be more worthy of girls' imitation? I remember a schoolmistress of my own, who, reading an English classic, came to the phrase "in love," which she struck out, substituting "taken with." Even after this lapse of time, I am unable to see the greater propriety of the phrase she preferred; and I don't know in what way the classics could have helped us better than by guiding us to fall in love after a suitable fashion, when our time came.

## CHAPTER III

### A GIRL'S CHARACTER

“She who finds pleasure in vice and pain in virtue is still a novice in both.”

FROM among the scores of young women whom one sees at work it is easy to pick out living examples of how not to do it. And then, of course, I see most of the women who fail, because those who can get on alone do not ask my opinion. For one capable and successful woman who comes to an acquaintance for advice, there are a dozen who travel round asking advice first of one and then of another, taking none from anybody; just like the confirmed invalids who visit half the physicians in London, and get a prescription from each, and who will do anything except change their mode of life, which is the only thing likely to do any good.

When I am asked to account for a woman's

success or failure, I seldom have much difficulty in doing it. A few successful women have talent beyond ordinary; most of them have good looks and more have good manners; but many of them have neither personal charm, nor money, nor good looks, nor talent, nor influential friends; there is only one thing that they all have, and that is a strong character. The longer one lives in the world and the wider one opens one's eyes, the plainer one sees that a strong character is the best of all a woman's possessions, whether from the point of view of its possessor, or from the point of view of the community to which all belong. And by a strange perversity, it is the one possession that many people try to rob a woman of if she happens by good luck or good management to be born with it.

“Is character born or made?” I do not think any one can draw any line between the results of heredity and those of education; at any rate, I am sure none can be drawn here; for both have deepened the same outlines and thrown light and shade on the same details. We inherit the family tendency, and are trained up in the family ways. And the consequence is that it

is the rarest thing in the world if the girls do not *chassent de race*. What we are born and brought up to be, that we are, and our employers get the good and the bad of it, as wise employers know.

A short time ago there was an idea afloat that every worker's merits could be sampled and ticketed according to examination. The plan has not worked so well as was expected. The women who come best out of a set examination do not always acquit themselves best in the more varied trials of life. The design of a few years' schooling lies conspicuous near the surface at the outset of a career, but the colours always show a tendency to sink in after a little time has gone by, and then the old design, elaborated during many years of home life, comes to the top.

When you ask me what you should teach your girl in order to insure her success, I have the answer ready :

Train the savage out of her; teach her to deny herself to-day for the sake of better things to come to-morrow. So you will lift her far above the mass of men and women who tread on our privileged heels.

Train the animal out of her; teach her to



do her tale of work first, and to think of the gratification of her appetites after. Teach her to see that the reward of good work, the one reward that never fails of coming, is to know that the work is well done. Don't reward her good work while she is a child with something to eat and something to wear.

Train her judgment. Let her judge for herself now and again, in order that she may be able when the time comes to guide her own life. Don't keep her in leading-strings till she is past growing time, and then leave all the world to laugh over her ugly falls at a time of life when one falls heavy.

Train her to be strong in action as well as in judgment. Don't try to make her soft for your own indolence and love of soft things. Suppose I were to say of your son, "Oh! such a nice-looking boy, with a pretty smile, and pretty hair. So gentle and soft you can't think!" Would you be pleased? Or if it were somebody else's boy, would you augur well of that boy's career if he were launched penniless in the world? But you say yourself of your daughter, "Every one thinks she's pretty; not good features, but she looks

pretty when she smiles, and she has such pretty hair. So gentle and soft, you can't think ; I feel sure she'll get on." Will she get on ? And if she does, in what direction ?

Train her to say a good round " No " when she is face to face with wrong-doing, in and out of herself.

Train her to be diligent. Don't let her loaf for amusement. Get her into the rare habit of using all her time and wasting none. Make her do some kind of work and do it well and systematically.

Train her to be punctual ; not merely punctual by the clock, but punctual in carrying out when the moment comes plans that have been beforehand judged to be wise. Do not fribble away strength in deciding on one out of a dozen plans, and then slip aside when the time comes for deliberate thought to pass into courageous action. Teach her to do what has to be done at the moment when it is due, and never accept or give " I don't like it " as a reason for leaving a duty unfulfilled, nor " I do like it," as a reason for doing an unwise thing.

Train her to be persistent, and not to be turned aside by the first difficulty in her path.

Do not let her go through life having "rages" for all things by turns, to calm out of each "rage," as soon as the work becomes in the least distasteful, or as soon as she is in the least tired. Do not take up any employment lightly, but once taken up, cast no employment lightly away.

Train her in the faith that she has no right to be made happy; but that she has a duty to make herself useful.

Train her to be scrupulously honest. Many a woman wastes goods that she would not pilfer; and hundreds of women steal time that their employers have paid for, who would shrink from stealing two pennyworth of stamps that their employer had also paid for. Lives are spent and wages are earned in watching that other people don't cheat; and workers who need no watching are always worth their salt.

Train her to respect work and workers. You will not do this by giving out feeble truisms about the value of work when the tardy moment comes for your daughter to cease her life of idleness, which you and she have clung desperately to until it was torn out of your grasp. If all her life long she has heard you pitying

the working woman as "poor thing!" if you have treated the children's governess as of inferior station to the children themselves; if, since the child can remember, she has seen that you invite those women of your acquaintance who work, because they work, to your second-best parties, or maybe not even to any party; it is idle to expect that your daughter will feel any proper pride in her work until she has been out in the world long enough to unlearn those foolish lessons you have taught her. And until she has proper pride in her work, she will do it amiss.

Inspire her with a determination to know. The love of knowledge for its own sake brings great and pure pleasure; it is a pleasure of which no change of circumstances, no advance of age, can rob us. Teach your daughter that the end of school life is the beginning of learning rather than its natural end. Teach her also that the best learning lies not within the covers of any books, and that the most valuable learning must be gathered without a teacher's aid.

Teach her that, and you have insured success, be her calling what it may.

“Oh! dear me,” I hear some one say, “but sha’n’t we have rather a dreadful girl here? And after all, you agree that girls are best married: now do you think that a man would like a girl brought up like that? Men like something clinging. I don’t think I am more worldly than the rest, but I do want to see my girls comfortably settled. It’s all very well to train them to work, but I hope they won’t ever have to work; I hope they’ll marry. And I have always thought that it is a woman’s duty to please men—in a nice sort of way, of course, I mean; and she ought to make her husband happy.”

I was never bold enough to promise a recipe for getting girls “married off.” If I promised that, my door-bell would never cease ringing. I set myself the less impossible task—how to make a girl into a good worker. And I have written down, as plainly as I knew how, the things that, in my opinion, are supremely necessary to produce a good and capable worker in any field on this work-a-day world. Given a girl trained on these lines, and you will find that every employer will try to snap her up, and that no employer will willingly let her go

again. I am always begging my friends to reason from their own experience, instead of listening to what I and other people say on matters that are well within their own competence. You are an employer of women's labour. If you get hold of a servant who is diligent, unselfish, scrupulously honest in word and deed, eager for duty and careless for reward, patient, punctual, and of good judgment, do you willingly let her go? Bad times come in every trade, and when they come the worst servant is discharged first. When bad times come to you, and you manage with one less servant, do you not stretch a point to keep so good a girl? Such servants are unfortunately rare? Exactly so; but they are not more rare in one walk of life than in another. "Godliness has the promise of this life." I wish people cou'd be made to see that it is the possession of godliness, of goodness, that makes this world, hard though it is, a safe place to leave boys and girls alone in.

And when I come to this point many of my friends gather up their skirts and go. For they say they came to me to hear something new, befitting the strange new times

in which we live. And I, after hearing all about their symptoms and pretending to sympathise with all their difficulties, have nothing better to offer by way of opinion than a little elementary morality and sociology, together with a saying as old as the hills! Godliness, indeed! What has that to do with getting paid work? Goodness! The girls are as good girls as ever breathed. They have never done anything really wrong in their lives.

As for being elementary, that my morals must be, for we are discussing the foundation of a busy life and a strong character. We are talking about what in the beginning now and for ever has to lie at the bottom of everything if it is to stand firm. On the top of it you may rear any superstructure you please; and I guarantee it against wind and weather. Fashions in architecture change; but the solid earth is beneath every architect's feet. I confess that I get bewildered in my turn when I hear people complaining that men's customs move so fast, and then complaining again because I remind them that God's laws endure.

Would it be any less perplexing if the old truths ceased to be true in this strange new

world? \* Truth is truth all the world over, and all time through. I cannot invent any new truths, for there are none. All I or any one can do is to show old truths that in your perplexity you had overlooked. For my part I believe that we and the girls were set in the world in order that we might become godly—or good, if you prefer the word. And I do not know how we are to learn that or any other lesson in the world except by means of the material objects that surround us. We are put into a hard, work-a-day world. Such as it is, so we find it and shall leave it, and only the profane imagine that they could have arranged it better. When we have done our work and developed our souls as far as they can be developed under these present conditions, we and the girls shall find other work and other conditions awaiting us elsewhere. Meanwhile, I am sure it is much better to learn the lessons that are set us rather than to leave them on one side while we set ourselves lessons of our own choosing. If I want to be set to higher work, I try to fit myself for it by doing in my best possible way the simple work that is given to me now. I should stand poor chance of



promotion, in any sphere with which I am acquainted, if I sat with my hands folded and would not do what was to be done because I could not do what I fancied ! And in this hard, work-a-day world we do not need goodness (granted that there be such !) of the idle, passive, negative kind. We want workers who will sweep diligently at their own little corner of the world, and, happen what may, leave that cleaner than they found it. Passive goodness, soft of texture and of no particular shape, may be easy to stow in the close quarters, and easy to rear in the relaxing atmosphere of a luxurious middle-class home ; but it is active goodness of which the world stands in need. And what the world has need of it will help to keep alive ; what it has no need of may, for all it cares, die by the wayside. If you want work to do, you must do the work that is wanted. If the public is to buy your wares, they must be what the public demands. It is the most foolish thing, and one of the most common, to bring up just the sort of girls that nobody wants to employ, and then to grumble because they are unemployed. " He who pays the piper calls the tune."

For we and the girls have to pipe our little tune in a hard world. All sages and thinkers are agreed that it is a hard world. No thinker has ever said that we are in the world in order that we may have "a good time," nor even that the "good time" may be had by striving after it. Of course it is possible to give children in the nursery some sort of good time if one sets one's best endeavours that way. But I say deliberately "some sort of a good time," because I am sure that even at this early age the truth of things is too much for us in the case of many children—of all children, that is, who are a little more thoughtful, who have a little more stuff in them than the average. Spoiled children are not happy children; that is a truism. And even if they were, those few years of childish happiness might easily be bought at too dear a rate. For how very short childhood is! Mothers, who naturally find the culmination of their existence in their lives as wives and mothers, often seem to me to forget how very short childhood and girlhood is compared with the long years that we middle-aged folk have to live through. Nursery life, childhood, girlhood, cannot possibly

be prolonged beyond five-and-twenty years; and mothers know well how that, long before twenty-five years have gone over the baby's head, the baby begins to look a little old, and a little ill, and a little bored. The old life no longer suffices. The old interests pall. And then mother and daughter knock at my door, or at that of some other humble professor of work.

"No one can say that I haven't done my best to make my children happy," mamma says, plaintively. "Girls think they would like to be married, but I tell mine there's a good deal to put up with. After all we've gone through, it is hard to see them so discontented. They've had everything that money can buy. But they don't seem to be going to marry. There are no men nowadays. And so I think perhaps she'd be happier if she did something. What do you advise her to do?"

When our consultation begins after this fashion, I always feel a little hopeless, because I know that it is difficult to make a girl either happy or useful if she has been brought up in the faith that she ought to be made happy, and not that she should make herself useful. And it is a poor sort of duty that people do if they

only set about it as a *pis aller*, when they find that pleasure swings just above their reach. And I know also that this sort of girl will leave off her work to snatch at pleasure again the very first time that a bough waves low above her head. I count many employers among my friends. But how can I recommend her? They listen to me and take my girls because they fancy I sometimes know the truth, and always tell as much as I know of it. If I recommend this girl there's an error in my judgment, or a fault in my honesty, and I cannot afford either the one or the other.

But when a thoroughly capable and industrious woman comes to me I do not count it a favour that I hasten to tell the truth about her to my best friend among employers. I have never known a woman to want work who loved work and could do it. They are the incapables and the idlers who complain that there is nothing to do, and that everything is overstocked. And the worst of it is, that I have no remedy to suggest for adult incapacity and idleness; I have found it oftenest a chronic, incurable complaint; the afflicted wherewithal never seeming to know how their peculiarities strike other persons, and

believing themselves to be singled out from the common world on account of their intrinsic worth. Incapable women generally think that a good worker is rather a coarse person, lacking the natural refinement that keeps the hands white and soft in the midst of a rough and necessitous world. And the idle are content to believe that they have a right to be waited on by the workers, as queen bees are by common consent of the hive; overlooking the fact that idle women, at least those who come to me, have not a queen bee's justification. Given an incapable and idle woman of five-and-twenty or thirty, I prefer to leave her. We cannot do our own work unless we know it; and I have over and over again proved myself incapable of undoing the past. But a woman is not idle and incapable in middle life unless she has been allowed to do nothing, and to do that badly, while she is growing up.

And I do not wish to shirk the marriage question which so constantly crops up. Of course it crops up when we speak of women's work. For it would be a poor training that unfitted a woman for matrimony; and we should all work for the future with a poor

heart if other women's children or our own children were not to make that future live.

"It is a woman's duty to please men, in a nice sort of way; and to make her husband happy." Some mothers talk about the men who do or do not marry their daughters as if a mother's chief duty were to play the confidence trick, with men for her dupes. Given a woman wise, industrious, persistent, eager for duty, teachable, unselfish, do you think she would not please men? You must think badly of the men if so! Do you think such a woman would not know how to make a husband happy if she had one? Can you imagine a better fate for the man you love best than to find such a mate? A woman of that sort, without a penny in her pocket, is better worth, even from a money standpoint, than many women we could name who have thousands for their portion. A woman of that sort brings success wherever she goes; and to such a one many a man owes a brilliant position as well as a happy hearth. It puts me past patience when people talk as if married women never had to work, and had no hand in bringing success or failure. The wife of many a professional man works harder than

most professional women. And a shrewd observer can generally foretell on a man's wedding-day whether he will come to the top or stay at the bottom. Competition is severe everywhere, and not among women only. It is hard enough to insure a daughter's success; but most of my friends tell me that it is even more difficult to know what to do for a son. Two men are swimming for dear life in stormy waters. One has a wife who can swim beside him; the other has a wife who catches him by the hair, "clinging." Which man will be saved? Which daughter would you rather own? You lament that there are no marrying men nowadays; that the men are selfish, mercenary, or afraid. It may be so. I am sure only that if they saw their friends draw prizes out of the lottery they would be more ready to thrust their own hands in. Competition is severe; if the average wife helped a man on, the average man could not afford to leave her. But what is a man to do beginning life with even a pretty wife, unable to work yet eager for work's reward, idle, unpunctual, pleasure-loving, limp of hand and slack of judgment? Many things he may have, but he'll not taste success.

"You really *are* a little perverse and contradictory," says mamma to me. "Do you, or don't you, think my girl will be happier if she does something? Because that is my point. She isn't happy now; and I'd give all I possess to see a happy look on her face, as once there used to be. Of course you don't care about that; you tell me I oughtn't to think about making her happy when I set her to work; but I've a mother's heart, and I don't care a scrap about anything else. What is the world to me? It's only the place where my children live."

Of course I know the girl will in the end be happier if she has something to do. I also know that the chances are against her ever having become so miserable if you had been one of those who look towards the end of your lines of conduct. I gather that you and she are among the many who live your life from hand to mouth. Yet you'll never get happiness out of work if you set out on a straight road to look for it and expect to see it round the first corner. There are some people who, as each job is completed, sit down to wonder why they are not as happy as they thought they must be, when this



task was behind them ; and some women who start on work are quite astonished to find that the discipline of any steady work when they are not accustomed to it, brings at first more pain than pleasure. Happiness does not come at first ; it may not come for a very long time, and it is pretty sure not to come until you have given up looking for it. Happiness comes at the end of work well done, but that is not because the work alters, but because the doing of it alters the worker ; and that is why I am able to promise that something to do will in the long run bring your girl the happiness you crave for ; the cause of her present unhappiness lies in herself, and she must be changed. But it hurts horribly to be changed after we have got fixed and set into a wrong shape. And this pain is the natural and the fitting punishment for what a distinguished writer has called "the fundamental immorality of the idle."

One thing more about happiness. Disbelievers in the work of women launch their objections at us full face, and we meet them with what courage we can muster, and as many smiles as we may. And just in the thick of

the argument they turn right round and plant a blow from behind.

"We had feared," so they say, "that you working women would be miserable, and unhealthy, and all that sort of thing. We thought it was the part of every good citizen to rescue you from your work. But now we see another danger. You are so very happy as you are, that you don't want to be otherwise; you'll never want to be married. And you are so strong and well-grown that to leave you in single estate seems a grievous pity. After all, the world can get on without Greek and science, but it can't go on without babies. It's a mistake to let spinsters be too happy."

So we might leave our hinderers to fight one another, and to come to the fate of the Kilkenny cats, when we should have a fair field and no one to hold us back. But I think any one who has experience of the women who work will see quite as much sense in one objection as in the other. Working spinsters of the middle-classes are on the whole very happy in England of to-day. Considering that among their ranks stand women who have never been loved, and women who have been dis-

appointed in love, and all those who are poorest, and all those who have fought hardest against odds ; and the many who have failed to do what they hoped ; and the few who can look forward with any certainty to being cared for in old age, or nursed in sickness ; is it not wonderful that the working spinsters are as happy as they are ? Work is the one pain-killer that leaves no bad effects behind it.

## CHAPTER IV

### HOUSEHOLD WORK

“Each creature hath a wisdom for his good.  
The pigeons feed their tender offspring, crying,  
When they are callow ; but withdraw their food,  
When they are fledge, that need may teach them flying.”

FEW middle-class women live and die without having to manage a house, either their own or another person's. A pleasure to some women and a torment to others, it is a duty that has to be done somehow by all. Most mothers of girls expect, or hope, that the girls will marry somewhere between twenty and thirty years of age ; and when I urge the necessity for training a girl for a profession, or for educating her well, I am constantly told,

“But you see it would cost a great deal of money, and we are not wealthy people, though I dare say you think we must be, considering how we live. If I spend money on the dear girls now (except, of course, to dress them

nicely, and all that) and they marry, it will all be as good as thrown away. And they'd be glad of a little ready money then; and their father says if they have it now they can't possibly have it again. How perplexing it all is! How difficult to balance for and against! And you assure me that if I wait till the dear girls' chances of marrying are over, say till thirty or thirty-five (though I'm sure I've known girls marry happily even at forty) it will be too late then to enter a paying profession, or at least to succeed in it?"

All of which is entirely beside the mark, so far as learning household work goes. That training can in no case be "as good as thrown away." You and I might not agree as to what is or is not wanted by a married or a single woman in the way of general education; but we are on firm ground of agreement here. No one denies that a married woman is the happier and does her duty the better if she knows how to keep the house going. And if, like many mothers, you are fretting lest the family money should take to itself wings, and your daughters should one day be left penniless or poor, you may take comfort in the certainty that house-

hold work and household management is the most permanent and one of the best paid of all the many professions for women. A woman who can manage either a large or a small house well is always sure of employment and an income.

. In the second place, this profession costs no money to learn—nothing except time and endeavour. On the contrary if, as you suggest, you are now spending just a trifle more on your household arrangements than you feel quite comfortable about, you might even save money by letting your daughters do a part of the work that you now pay wages to have done.

You must forgive me if, in my desire to make matters quite plain between us, I explain that I am not recommending your girls to learn household work in order to get them married the sooner; I only say that whether as wives or spinsters they will be worth more. A capable housewife is not hindered from marrying; and neither is she helped, though I often wish she were. But that she has a better chance of success in married life no one can doubt for a minute who has any wide experience of society, or who has been accustomed to listen to long

panegyrics on married bliss, or still longer jere-miads on married misery. I think it possible that an equal amount of time and endeavour spent on outside adornment, instead of on any sort of inward growth, might bring a husband nearer. And in the course of what I call my consulting practice, many mothers and some daughters have come to me for advice, and have said, more or less directly, but yet quite unmistakably, that they wish to spend all their money and strength on such things as are likely to attract any husband at the earliest possible moment. When, after that, they ask point-blank for my candid opinion, I am unable to advise them to occupy themselves in household work, when they might be adorning their persons, or at a party, or practising their skill in flirtation, or in more harmless games. And I will add thereto that the strange candour of these ladies compels me to reluctant admiration—an admiration that is withheld from other friends of mine who have the same desires and aims, but who daren't own up to them, and have not steady purpose to pursue any aim with a single mind.

But in order to do any good at it, your

daughter must learn to manage a house *well*. Not long ago I had to advertise for a house-keeper. Replies came by the hundred; and at least fifty per cent. of the women who wanted the place recommended themselves on the ground that they had been brought up in a luxurious home and were now penniless; or that they had kept house for a father who had gone bankrupt; or that they had always been accustomed to have things "nice," and had not been trained to any work. For what other duties would a woman recommend herself because hitherto she had fulfilled none of them? In what other profession is it thought an advantage to come of a family whose habit it is to fail in that particular line of business? The first duty of a housekeeper is to spend to the best advantage the money she can afford, and on no account to spend more. And the second is to have the habit of systematic work. Which brings me to my next point. When I suggest—as I often do suggest—that a provision should be made for the girls by putting into the bank one servant's keep and wages, letting the girls do some of the work, I am almost always met by the same objection.



“It would never answer. Household work must be done regularly every day, without fail. If it were left to the girls they would do a great deal at first, while they were in the mind; and then they would want to go out, or they would get tired, and then the work would get behindhand, and the whole household would be upset.”

Ah! here we put a finger on the important spot in a girl's training. It does not much matter what work a girl does, so long as she does something systematically and punctually, alike when she is in the mood for it and when she is not; a duty to be accomplished daily, whereby she earns her playtime. And that is one of the great advantages of household work as a means of training. It must be done every day as the clock strikes, all the year round. No matter how diligently you have worked this week, you always have to begin over again at the beginning next Monday. And if you shirk, some one else will certainly suffer, and may possibly scold. Whereas if you paint pictures, or make frocks, or write a book, it is open to you any fine morning to say that you are not in the mind, or that

you mean to take a holiday ; and the needle and cotton, or the pen, or the brush, will lie patiently by till you take up your task again. It is nobody's business but your own, and if you grow into slipshod habits they are your own possession also.

But the constant, steady discipline of home work may be another matter. It may be used to train a daughter for any work, so that when she comes to, say, thirty years of age, and has to earn, the habit of diligent, unselfish, careful doing is part of her nature. Those who know most about the work done by women who are no longer young, and who have not been trained to any particular work, know that their failure is generally due to want of business habits. It is not that they can't do this or that, but that they can't do anything every day, year in and year out. The woman who can be trusted to get up early in the morning without being called, and whom you can leave at work in the absolute certainty that she will keep steadily on at it till you come back again, is one for whom anybody could find work of some sort to-morrow morning.

We are all employers of labour, and all

labour, whether of men or women, is subject to similar conditions. Is not dependableness the thing of all others that is worth most to us? It does not much matter what a person can do; and it matters only in a secondary way whether the thing is done extremely well. All workers have their limitations, and if we know what those limitations are, we can reckon upon them and arrange accordingly. The fact is that most persons spend their lifetime in doing over and over again work that is very simple and easy in itself; and all that is required of them is that they shall go on doing these simple things with honesty above temptation, and pertinacity not to be disturbed. There is no comfort to be got out of a worker whom we must stand over, even though he or she may work extremely well when the fancy seizes. We would all rather employ some one less clever, but who will go on and on, happen what may, till the job is finished. What a nuisance it is if your dressmaker or bootmaker promises to finish a piece of work on a certain day, and then leaves it unfinished to go off in search of amusement, or to do something else that is more attractive or better paid? We do not stint our blame.

And yet it must be wearisome to go on all one's life making dresses and boots for other people ! "They want to go out, or they get tired, and then the work gets behindhand." No work gets done if the worker is not put, or does not put himself, under strong discipline. If other people's children become dependable workers, it is not because they were born dependable, nor working, but because they were early trained to work at something, no matter what, in a dependable manner.

How are girls to learn household work ? Much as they would learn any other business. We are often told that a boy who is to be, say, an engineer, ought to begin at the beginning and work his way up. He learns how to do with his hands every part of the work ; not because he means to keep on doing that always, for mechanics can be engaged to do manual work at a lower rate of pay than he can demand elsewhere ; but because if he cannot do a thing himself he does not know if it is well done, nor how, if it is badly done, it might be done better.

Let a girl learn to do with her hands every part of the ordinary work of a house. As

things now are, it is not unlikely that she will need actually to do such work, habitually or occasionally, before her life is ended; for domestic servants are an expensive luxury, and one for which there is a growing demand with a limited supply. She is, for many reasons, less rather than more likely to have to do domestic work because she knows how, and, moreover, to do it will make her miserable only if she does not know at which end to begin. The girl will not learn without devoting time and energy to the task; she will find some of her work unpleasant, and a good deal of it monotonous and uninteresting. Do you suppose her brother in the engineer's yard always enjoys every hour of his day? And yet, distasteful though it is at times, he is happier even now because he forces himself to do his work, than he would be if he allowed himself to leave it undone. And so would she be. In at least half the cases that come before me of girls who are unhappy and can't get on at home, the fault is that the girls have no active duties to perform. Of passive duties plenty are recommended to their notice, such as meek obedience and smiling content; soft answers

and unaggressive manners. But youth is not the passive time of life. Nature has given the young people a fund of activity, and no doubt she means them to use it. There is work enough waiting in the world to be done; and here amongst household work I am on undebateable ground.

“A woman’s place is at home!” “Women ought not to compete with men.” “Women ought not to lead idle lives.” Every one will subscribe to one or all of these propositions, and the opposing camps find themselves in rare amity now that household work is being discussed.

“Indeed they don’t!” retorts some one, and it may easily be guessed to which camp she belongs. “I don’t think that every woman was born to nurse the babies and cook the dinner. There are some women who have a soul above that sort of thing.”

Possibly. We need not try now to measure relative heights of soul. But there are many women in every rank of life whose soul reaches to precisely that height. That is what they fit. And modern social conditions force them on to a bed of Procrustes. There are girls in hundreds of well-to-do and wealthy homes who

have strong capable bodies, crying out to be used, together with an intellectual capacity that is good for very little. A woman need not be useless nor a fool because she has no gift for book-learning. The boys with strong bodies and no mind to speak of go to the Colonies, and there are happy and useful doing the manual work that is withheld from upper-class persons in the old world. There is no such outlet for the girls. Their activities overflow into games, which often cost more money than ought to be spared out of the family wealth; or they dance as long as they may, agonising to obtain a due supply of the necessary ball-dresses; and presently the girl finds she is a woman, and the dances and the games do not lead to anything, and that to come into life, and play games, and dance, and go out of it again, is a poor and unsatisfying performance. And the next steps are to the doctor's, or sometimes to the door of a humble professor of work.

What we have, that we must use, on penalty of losing it. It is a universal law, and the woman who comes to me with her strong, well-grown, unused body has fallen under its condemnation. From her babyhood she has been

fed and cared for, duly exercised and still more rested, and the result is that she has grown to be what she is. She has a splendid physique. She is half a head taller than many of the men, her contemporaries, who were caught early and condemned to a City office. What she likes is to do something with her hands. She would be in her element married to a colonist. It seems such a grievous pity that all that physical power should be lost, not only in the present but to the future. Meanwhile here in England, she would be far happier and better than she is if she were in such a position that she must work hard to keep the house going. She longs for work; she comes asking me if I can suggest something. And it turns up in the course of our conversation that her previous advisers have told her to attend University Extension lectures, and to "work up" the subject; or to "work at" water-colour painting. It would be so inexpressibly ridiculous if it weren't such a pitiful waste. The under-sized folk who have not been well-fed and aired in childhood cannot do the physical work for which she is able, and they are forced into the over-



crowded ranks of those who drive a quill, or use feeble brain power in a more or less imitative way. It is so foolish to tell her to neglect her personal gifts, and to compete with the common herd off her own peculiar vantage ground. Besides, even if she did do brain-work or book-work, it would not make her happy, nor keep her well.

Of course I am familiar with the usual reply: "My girls have to do so much school work that they never have time to help me!" If they work so hard that there is not time for recreation, there is something wrong. And the best recreation is change of occupation. Loafing, for which many schoolgirls find time, is the most tedious of all occupations, and the most unprofitable. Do not tell me, as many have done, "The poor girl can't be always doing; she must have time to sit and think." Loafers never think. Moreover, youth is not the time for thinking; it is the time to build a foundation of facts for the thoughts that will come later. Youth is the time to observe and learn, and to hear what wise people have thought in time gone by. When a girl has tired her head in school it is the best rest for her to work her

hands out of school. It is much more educational than to sit and read. Most of what can be done to improve the mind by printed books is already done in school, if it be a good school; and it is often only an insidious form of idleness that drives her to spend all her spare time in treading over the trampled pathway that goes between her brain and print, instead of treading out a new pathway between her brain and her hands.

A woman whose fingers are all thumbs is a poor useless creature, whether wife or spinster. There are a thousand and one things that must be done with a woman's hands or be left undone. No machinery is fine enough for the job. And yet there are thousands of women in the wealthier classes who call themselves educated, and whose hands are as limp and as clumsy as those of the average imbecile, and whose capacity of mind, as well as of body, would be largely increased by a persistent use of those progressive finger exercises commonly employed for the education of children born deficient in brain. I have known girls who grew rapidly in mental power during a term away from school helping mother. And with-

out advising all girls to learn household work after this fashion, I am yet sure that no girl will be less capable than her classmates at school because she is more capable than they are at home. It is a fact that everything a girl learns to do with her hands increases the power of her brain.

Besides doing with his hands, there are many things that our budding engineer must learn. He is set down for a fool if he complains that his work is beneath his capacity when as yet he has not mastered the A B C of its technicalities. He has to learn the properties of the various materials with which his work is done, so that he may choose out for each purpose that which is best. He makes himself acquainted with the customs of the trades directly in contact with his business, so that he may not lie at the mercy of the men with whom he deals. How many girls think they are too high for household work, who yet have not troubled themselves to do this! How many if you sent them to choose anything at the shop, will openly avow before they start that they will "ask the man"! And yet shopping is the one employment that they seem to think they were created for.

Our engineer can estimate the cost in money or labour of the work that he has to perform, or to direct the performance of. Few women can tell you what they spend themselves; still fewer how much less or more they would spend if they changed their habits and lived after the fashion of a rich or a poor neighbour over the way.

Lastly, a man can seldom attain to any high position in his sphere of work unless he knows how to manage men. The one power that is always and everywhere rare and valuable is the power of organisation, the faculty of getting out of other people the best work of which each one is capable. This has nothing to do with learning, for the most learned persons are often without it, while the most ignorant may possess it to a high degree. The power of organisation is valuable to a man, but invaluable to a woman. For every well-to-do woman has to manage or mismanage a woman or women who work under her orders; and it takes a great deal of organising power to make a present-day household run as upon greased wheels. A first-rate organiser is perhaps born, not made. But whatever capacity we inherit, we may make the worst or the best of it; and as this is one of the duties

that each of the girls must try at, we had better try our best to make the best of her.

(1) Those who can't control themselves will never control others. A spoiled child never becomes a good organiser; for what we mean by a spoiled child is one who is driven habitually or often by his own feelings of the moment. "Poor child! Don't make him do it! He doesn't like it, and I can't bear to see him unhappy." From the evidence before us I should judge that the child of whom you speak has not inherited, and is not being trained in power of organisation. She who would command must obey. And the best obedience is that which we render to our own better judgment, a stern master who never leaves us, as we may be left any fine day by the person or persons whose bidding we are accustomed to do. In which case, by force of habit, we may fall into the error of obeying where it is our business to command.

(2) All power comes by practice. If a girl has never had a chance of exercising power she will not know how to use it rightly when the chance comes. A very little space with a few tiny objects upon it will be enough for

her to try upon. When the child was quite young, did you not allot to her a little strip of garden ground, where she might hoe and dig in and out of the proper season, and make a mess at her pleasure? It answered admirably. So long as she had her own bit, she never interfered with yours; but if she hadn't had her own bit, there would have been continual vexation and strife, her hoe busily engaged among your seedlings, and her active little feet driving the spade under your choicest plants. It is the same old story, only that now she wants a little bit of the household allotted to her. And do not forget that liberty of action means liberty to do the wrong thing; and that the knowledge that one has made a mistake in a very simple everyday matter is the best of cooling medicines for hot-headed youth.

(3) It is commonly said that men who have done the work of a trade make better masters than men who are contented to begin at the top. • And a mistress who has taken her turn at household work will see that the work of her house is well done; but she will be patient while it is being done, and patient even though now and again it is neglected. Once a woman

knows what household work means, she will never again fancy that it is either natural or right for some women to have nothing but drudgery, while others have nothing but play. And if she no longer has to sweep her own floor and cook her own dinner, that is only because from her richer opportunities a harder service is demanded.

Lastly, she who can do household work never is without an employer. Come what may, she has herself. She must have food bought and cooked, and clothes made and mended, and a house swept and garnished. And she must either perform these services for herself, or pay her substitute. I do not suggest that women should gain a precarious livelihood by washing one another's clothes. I only say that if she does not wash them she must pay the washing bill; and that if you must be out of work, it is better to save money than to spend it; better to have something than nothing to do. Most women who earn are short of spare cash, and it makes an endless difference to their buying capacity if, in the daily necessities of living, they are self-sufficing.

## CHAPTER V

### PROFESSIONAL WORK

“She who would eat the kernel must crack the nut.”

I USE the word “professional” in its widest possible sense. People are not always agreed as to what are and what are not professions for men, and I imagine that no one will be bold enough to try to lay down hard and fast rules anent professions for women. Certainly, no one will quarrel with me if I have to speak presently of a “professed” cook; there are those who think that a woman with proper ambition should never go beyond that necessary calling. Nor will any one dispute the fact that the law and medicine are among the recognised professions for both sexes. Between these two extremes all my few remarks shall find place. In the second place, a professional woman, be her profession what it may, does at least profess



to be competent to do well one particular kind of work. We use the word in a third sense when we mean, as we often do, that professional persons receive payment for their work, in contradistinction to amateurs, who may do the same work, who occasionally work as well, but who are not paid. What I am going to write about in this chapter is the training of girls to do one sort of work well—so well that the world will pay them money for doing it.

You will observe that there are two things to be thought of—the work and the wages ; and we will contrive, if you please, to keep our ideas of the two just a little way apart. I am constantly asked whether I think that all girls should be trained for a profession, when all that is really meant is whether I think that all girls, rich and poor, should be compelled to earn pocket money or maintenance. I am of opinion that every girl should be trained to work well, and that no girl should be allowed to do any work in a slipshod, “amateurish” fashion, just because she does not need the wages. The value of work to ourselves, or to the world, does not reside in, and is not to be measured by, the money that is paid for its doing. The best work, like the

worst, is never paid for ; it cannot be. Except in an age dominated over by materialism, it could not be necessary to say such a simple thing.

But when I am asked whether I think all girls should be trained to earn money, I am apt to say "yes" again, though perhaps with a few mental reservations. Every girl should be taught to do one sort of work so well that the world will readily pay her money for doing it, should she need the money. Even if she never earns the money, she will face this world with a lighter heart and better courage if she knows that she carries her own right to live at her fingers' ends. Parents often watch through the night and worry through the day thinking of the uncertainties of the future. Do they think that the girls never watch or worry as they wonder what the future has in store for them ? Many a time when a girl has been pale and thin and fretful, I have known that the "concealed worm" was dread of a penniless future, for which she knew herself to be unprepared. Mother and father continually dinned into her ears that she and the others would have a scant livelihood if they did not marry,

and get a home of their own ; and meanwhile neither mother nor father did anything to improve the prospect. "It is all very well now your father and I are alive, but when the money's divided up there'll be little enough. But unless things alter I don't see much likelihood of your marrying. You can't marry if you never see anybody. And we can't afford to entertain ; and if we could, it is no pleasure to your father to see a lot of young people. Naturally, he prefers men of his own age." So time goes on, and presently a whole family of daughters is flung on the unskilled labour market ; not one single one of them can do one single thing really well. If the girl foresaw what was coming, I only wonder she was not thinner and yet more fretful.

But I find that mothers do not care to discuss the general question of woman's work ; but rather the particular question and their own girls. If they can see them comfortably settled, the rest may go. And to settle a personal question, one has to go into personal matters. When you die can you leave your girl enough to live upon in the way that she is accustomed to live ? "I do not mean that she should have

as large a house for herself alone as you have for all your family; but will she be able to live much as her fellows live? If not, train her now for a profession, (1) for the sake of the wages; (2) because if she has nothing but spending to fill up her time with, she will need to spend more. I assume that you have something to leave her,—say £100 a year, for the sake of round numbers; and a very nice little capital it represents; but it is not enough to live upon as middle-class women are accustomed to live, though it will make all the difference between striving and ease to a woman who is earning her living—or a part of it. Or have you nothing to leave the girls? Is there no portion for them except a corner of the home so long as the father lives? Then there is all the more reason to decide at once what the girl is to do, and to set her forthwith to do it. If you can manage to keep a house over her head, and to provide her with pocket money for a few years, she is far better off than the girls who must go in for some profession where the returns are quick, and consequently small. Do we not all know that the little boys who leave the Board Schools and want to earn as much as possible

at once, without regard to what will happen to them later, are sent to be errand boys, in which profession they get a good many shillings a week, considering, just because they are not learning to do anything better? Do not send your girls out in a like shortsighted fashion. For the present they have a roof over their head, and food to eat; therefore they can afford to wait, as some girls cannot; and they can afford to go in for a long training, such as precedes all the best paid work.

But you don't care that your daughter should earn as long as you can keep her? You can as well allow her dress and pocket money as not?

Then what did you mean by saying that you can't leave the girls a competence when you die? Either there is plenty for the girls now and hereafter, or there is not enough hereafter, though there may be something for daily needs now. Money does not hurt by keeping; on the contrary. Take the money that you would give to the girl for dress and pocket-money if she sat idle, and put it in the Post Office for her to spend when she has done with work; she will earn much more

than most women do if she is too rich to need it. The one unjust and foolish thing is to say that you don't care to have the girl earn, and then to spend on yourself, or on the idle brothers and sisters, the wages that she does earn—or what you would give her if she did not earn, which comes to the same thing in practice, though it sounds a little more decent in words.

It does not much matter what a girl is trained to do, provided she can do something very well, and is willing to keep on doing it. Of course it is a little better to do one thing well rather than nothing well, even though the thing you do is one which you cannot or will not continue to do for a livelihood. But it often happens that a mother tells me her daughter is so very useful and sure to get on in the world because she makes her own dresses, or has learned at the class to churn butter, or cooked last week an excellent dinner for a party. "By all means," I respond. "There is a demand for such work. And I suppose she is willing to go on churning, or cooking, or dressmaking for hire, pocketing the wages of a cook, a dairy-woman, or a dressmaker?" Then both mother

and daughter are horrified. They had proposed to leave on one side the things the girl knows, and to begin on something altogether different; though why they think that an employer who wants, for instance, a clerk in his office, will particularly select a lady who can churn the butter on his country estate, or cook his dinner at home, I am quite at a loss to imagine. Sometimes she fancies she can earn a salary at looking on while others do the work for which she professes herself capable. But overlookers' places are and must be few, and they are given to those who have earned them by long, steady work. One does not suddenly jump to the top of any profession: one goes up step by step, slowly and with toil. Wages are paid for doing the same thing over and over again, day after day; they are not paid for doing anything now and again, when it happens to be attractive.

Nor does it much matter what a girl is trained to do, provided she is trained early. There are now many, and there are every year more, professions open to women, and if a girl has any special faculty she can use it. But whether she is to earn by mental or by manual labour, the earlier she begins the better. A

few years ago girls of the well-to-do classes were never put to work like their brothers as soon as they left school, and the consequence was that those who did work, even if they began late in life, had as good a chance as the rest, who also began late. Now it is rather the fashion for girls to work, so that those who begin late must compete unsuccessfully against those who began early. And youth is the time to learn any new thing. There are some handicrafts that no one can follow who begins after childhood ; and there is no handicraft or profession that a woman can hope to do much good at who begins on the wrong side of thirty. From thirty to forty a trained worker will probably earn her highest salary. After forty she will find that she cannot rough it as she once did ; that she gets sooner tired if she is on her legs all day ; that if she has to change employers it is not so easy to find a new one. And if this is true of a woman who has been trained young, what is to be said of one who has never been properly trained ?

The young folks are having their day. In every field of labour the same cry is raised. Employers find that young servants suit them



best. If you look through the advertisement columns of the newspaper, you will see that many doors are shut in the face of a woman who is over forty, or even thirty-five. So that if a woman does not begin to work until she is close upon thirty, she has only time to creep into the fag end of her profession; the best things are given to her juniors, who have not only more years of good work before them, but also more years of valuable experience behind them. And I need hardly say that a wise employer never prefers a woman who has only gone into work when she was driven there by adversity; she is not made of the same stuff as a first-rate worker; she is "bone-lazy," and the facts of the case are her label, which we all may read plainly. She has spent the most impressionable years of her life, the years after she left school, in loafing, in amusing herself, in waiting for something to turn up; she has not only not been trained to a profession, she has not been trained to any persistent work, until for one reason or another she has given up present hope of marrying. And by that time she is far less capable than she once was of learning any new thing; far less capable than

the younger women, who, poorer or wiser, have gone straight on from school to professional life.

There is the usual objection against setting the girls to work as soon as they leave school. "I always hoped my girls would marry as I did myself; though I suppose you strong-minded ladies will think that to be happily married is a very poor prospect. I can't help it; I dare say I'm old-fashioned; it seems to me the best for girls. But girls don't marry now, do they? Not as they did when I was young? But they might, you see. Alicia is rather nice-looking; it is not only I, her fond old mother, who say so. And some gentlemen admire Belinda greatly. Their father always says men don't like girls who are too capable and efficient. I've often heard him say that men like parasites, and perhaps they do. So you see if we spent money on training the girls it might even be a hindrance to them! Perhaps presently, if they don't marry, business may be better, and then we might think about taking your advice, and spending a little money on a training. And then you seem to forget that if a girl is at work she can't go into society, and she can't possibly marry if she doesn't see any-

body. For we don't have young people to our house. But my husband is very good in letting the girls go out, and we have a great many friends who ask them. And then, don't you think that a girl who works loses her position, you know? Men would take for granted she hadn't a penny behind her, and men won't marry poor girls—not if they know it.”

In answer to which there are many things to be said. First and foremost, the young men and the young women are closely related, and have much in common, chiefly a strong liking for one another's society. The girls have changed since *materfamilias* was young; is it not possible that the boys may have changed since *paterfamilias* stereotyped his sayings about men and things? After all, it is not a man of *paterfamilias*' age and tastes that the girl is going to marry, if she does marry. A woman working for a living has now a very different position to that which she held twenty or even ten years ago. And as to her showing that she is penniless by her work, that by no means follows. For my part, I do not believe that the choice of a profession during girlhood, nor the following of a profession during womanhood, either lessens the chances

of, or diminishes the suitability for, a married life. I believe that given two sisters, one following a profession and the other doing nothing, the busy sister will have as many offers of marriage as the unoccupied sister. One may meet with a possible husband at work as well as at play. I should say that the busy sister would be less likely to accept the first possible husband, but that only means that if she can't marry the right man, she would rather be as she is; that, tolerably well content, she knows that a change may not be for the better.

And here we are landed in the middle of another large question. Hundreds of helpless, middle-class women are brought up to choose between marriage and starvation. It is not a woman here and there who has to make that choice; it is every woman whose parents do not leave her when they die the means of living, and who have not given her while they lived the means of earning. We need not invent fictitious temptations that have no actual existence in life; this fiery temptation borders the path of every woman with empty pockets and feeble hands. Your girl sells herself in marriage for a comfortable annuity, accord-

ing to the manner approved by her class. And down below, another woman, nearer to starvation and more helpless, grasps in her turn at the money and ease she covets, selling also the only thing that she has to sell, namely herself, after her class fashion. And the social question is by that much deeper than before. I think we should never forget that while some good men still object to the following of professions by women, all bad men object to put women in independent positions; and they look at the matter (as we all do) from their own point of view.

Another cause operates strongly in keeping middle-class women idle till they are too old to begin work. You want to have at least one daughter at home to be a companion to you? It is very hard to have the trouble of bringing them all into the world, and then to be left alone just when you are not so young as you were, and their father is failing and getting a little irritable? Far be it from me to say that you should not have that or any other legitimate luxury if you can afford to pay for it; when one is getting on in years, there is no care like a good daughter's. But can you? The cot-

tage mothers, unless they are actually ill, and often not till they lie down to die, work along alone, and send all the girls out to earn their living in service. I have never supposed that they preferred doing so, but only that they were driven to it for lack of money; and I suppose that in the case of girls in service you will agree that it is a good thing for the girls that they are so driven? And yet the cottage mothers would be sooner justified than a needy middle-class mother, because when they die and the home is broken up the daughter is well able to take care of herself, and when she wants work she has but to hold up her hand and a dozen employers stand ready to pay her wages as a domestic servant. Your daughter who has pottered about all her life at home is unfit for any paid work, and is beside unfit to live alone. I know of no harder fate than to pass the best years of a life watching the old age and the death of first one member of a family and then another, and at the last to be left homeless, and poor, and solitary. Do not treat the daughter who loves you, and whom you love, worse than a strange employer would have to treat her! Any strange

employer for whom she performed such services would have to pay her a handsome salary. Any employer who used up all her youth would expect to provide for her old age. As to your not being able to pay the salary or to provide for the future, that, saving your presence, is all nonsense; millions of women, better than you and I, live at less expense than you and I do. And meanwhile, you have not even the excuse of being ill or old, and if you can't provide for your children you should not keep them at home idle for your own gratification.

An early and good training helps one enormously in professional work. But training is not much good unless it is followed by practice. Some parents seem to consider training as a thing that one may buy, just as one might buy plate and house-linen, and lay it by until it is wanted. When the girls leave school, they get them trained, more or less well, and then they keep them at home for months or for years, hugging themselves in the false belief that "if ever anything happens" the girls can, without more ado, step into the labour market and earn. Why do we not judge these matters by the light of our own common sense? If two cooks

offer themselves to you, and one has been working in a good place up to the present moment, and the other has been doing nothing at home since as a girl she went through the cookery school, do you hesitate for a moment which you shall engage? Yet the parallel is not quite fair, because cooks are scarce; it is unlikely that two should press their services on you at the same time; while workers of your daughter's sort are plentiful, and she will have to compete not against one, but against a dozen. If you cannot leave her a competence, get her specially trained for some calling as soon as her school education is complete, and when the special training has come to an end, set her to work, to practice what she knows; by that means you will probably leave her years hence in the receipt of a fair income, and in the enjoyment of a good position.

Every worker must have special training. That training may consist in the cultivation of some special gift, more or less rare; you may wish to make your girl into a pianist or a violinist, a singer, a painter, or an actress. Or it may consist in the acquirement of some special knowledge, such as law or medicine, classics or



mathematics. Or it may be that you wish to teach her a trade, such as hairdressing, or mantle-making, dispensing or bookbinding. Or perhaps you only wish to develop some manual skill, such as every woman possesses in greater or less degree; you will be satisfied if your daughter can serve behind a counter, can use a typewriter, can cook a meal. All have one thing in common; training is in all cases needed. The work that can be done without training more than is given to every girl at a decent school and in an average home is always work that is underpaid and overstocked with workers. The skill that you have acquired with little outlay and effort crowds of other women have acquired in the same easy way. Special training may last over months or over years. It may cost tens of pounds or hundreds. It may mean severe mental effort or easy manual exercise. There may be risk in it or none; it may lead towards a goal which few attain, along a road where there is no halfway house, or it may lead on so easy a path that every woman with goodwill can tread it safely. But whatever else it is or is not, training always means the expenditure of time and money.

And this is exactly what many fail to see. It happens often that a daughter is brought to me, and my advice is asked in the choice of work. I find that there is not one thing she can do already and not a pound forthcoming to pay for her being taught. She and her mother would not have come to me if they had not been hard up. Once upon a time they could always get twenty pounds out of papa by asking for it when he happened to be in a good humour; now it can't be done; mamma and the girls have talked the matter over, have come to the conclusion that one of them shall "do something" and even if I could get them trained for nothing, they cannot afford to wait for the pay.

"I don't know that it much matters what dear Ethel does; girls do all sorts of things nowadays; but it should be something where she'd soon begin on a nice salary. You see a long or expensive training is not at all what we want. If one of the younger girls married we should want dear Ethel home again. Of course it must be a pretty good position; I couldn't allow my girls to do anything that wasn't quite nice, you know. And it should be something

where she could live at home, if possible, and so that she'd have her own time to herself in the evenings. And her father and brothers would never consent to her being out late, you know ; my husband has very strict ideas about young girls."

As they sit there, complacently waiting for my diagnosis of the case, and dropping out sundry items respecting their symptoms, I look at the "young girl" in question, and decide that she will never see thirty again. Dressed to look like what she is, a respectable woman who wants to earn her living, I am sure she might travel London over safely, at any hour of the night ; she would never be noticed, for she is just like all other Englishwomen of thirty or thereabouts. And if she would face facts as they are, she would see that age with plain looks may, in default of a better, be a useful commodity. But even I dare not tell her so. I try to find out by a series of questions the direction in which she is least incapable. They look the sort of women who take keener interest in clothes than in most things. She has said she is poor, though one would not have thought it to see how she is dressed ; and I ask her if

she makes her own smart dresses, if she would like to do or to teach dressmaking? She did once help the maid to make a dress, but she never made a whole dress all alone by herself; she's sure she'd never get to the end of a long job like that.

She can't cook; there is one sort of cake she can make while cook is at hand.

She likes children very much when nurse has made them tidy to come down stairs; but don't I think it is very fatiguing to be with children for long?

She left school ever so many (I mentally say fifteen) years ago and she's sure she could not teach. It does not seem to occur to her that the subjects she studied at school are not devised solely for the torture of children, and that she might, at least theoretically, have pursued them after the mature scholarship of seventeen.

She can't write very legibly; and I remember that the note she wrote to me was ill expressed, imperfectly spelt, and devoid of any punctuation whatsoever.

Mamma says she can paint very nicely, but the girl herself knows just enough not to corroborate the statement.

She can play the piano a little, and she can carve wood somehow. Mamma has always thought she might do something with that, if the necessity arose.

Then I tell them as plainly as I dare what is the pay, the position, and the life of a twentieth-rate professional in the piano-playing or the wood-carving line. Mamma rises to her feet in a huff, and the girl thinks I am joking in order to get a rise out of her. They tell me of one acquaintance who teaches the piano, and of another who teaches wood-carving, both of whom earn a respectable competence. They hint that my information or my goodwill must be at fault. They expect the pay, and above all the position of a second or third-rate worker, and they can't do twentieth-rate work.

"No one could expect a gentlewoman to live on such a pittance" they say. "Life would be mere drudgery!" The answer to which is plain enough. Your employer does not care whether you are a gentlewoman or not, so long as he only employs you to cut wood, or to do many of the thousand and one things that women of the educated classes now

do for a livelihood. In some professions your manners, and carriage, and refined modes of thought are worth having and paying for, but if you deliberately turn your back on those professions and choose rather to do the work of a mechanic, or of a clerk, or of a tradeswoman, you must take the consequences. I am the last person who will blame you. Probably you gauge correctly your own capacity, and I think it is for the good of the world that folks should find their own natural level. But it is nonsense to talk about your education and your gentility if, immediately on removal of the props that have hitherto held you upright in society, you are fit for nothing but what can be done as well or better by your social inferior. I was told the other day of a young lady! forsooth, who being left penniless could do nothing for a living but wash her friends' pet dogs, and take them out a walking. She said the work suited her exactly. Failing her ministrations, the button boy did it. But then the button boy is not so foolish as to call himself genteel!

As for the drudgery, life *is* mere drudgery to all workers who are unskilled, unskilful, and rather idle; and what an unskilled worker

earns in any profession after thirty is never more than a pittance. One may do brain work until late on in life ; and even in manual work one may make up in experience, by the time one is thirty, what one has lost with youth. But this woman has the thirty years and no experience, and at no sort of unskilled labour are the years after thirty as valuable as the years before. It does not happen, and it would not be fair if it did happen, that the world will pay as much for the fag end of your life as for the best years of your life. There is a time for everything ; and the years after thirty are not the time in which we can best learn any new thing, though we can spare the time and pay the money to be taught. This mother and daughter who ask so much of life cannot even do that !

In most cases the training is best carried on away from home. Of course if a girl has been away from home before, it may be less necessary that she should go away again now. But training of whatever kind must mean the breaking off of old habits, and the taking up with new ones ; new habits come easier under new conditions. And then women who start on work for the first time need to be taught something more

than the technicalities of the chosen profession. Faults of temper, errors in judgment, rebellion against necessary authority, and the like, cause many failures; it is better that such faults should be exhibited during training to those whose business it is to cure them, rather than during work to the public, whose method of correction is that of swift and often severe punishment. And if a woman has spent a quarter of a century at home, and has not yet learned to be diligent and capable, you will see at once that her only chance is to go away from the home where she has been taught so inefficiently, and to have another try under wiser guidance.

In deciding on a profession for the girls, there are many things to be considered, and some obvious truths of which we should never lose sight.

(1) We know the world as it is now; but the children will have to make their way in the world when their time comes and our time is over. The world changes very rapidly; it is certain to continue changing. It is no good wasting our money and the children's lives in training them for a profession that depends only on passing fashions, or on customs



that are fading away. All other things being equal, it must be better to train the girls to fulfil a need that will last as long as the world does, rather than to minister to a craze that is founded on no fundamental necessity of human nature, a craze of this decade that will be forgotten as soon as the decade is passed.

Let me explain my meaning: you can imagine a society that did not admire brass work, nor church embroidery, nor new wood-carving that tries to look old. *Fin-de-siècle* England does pay its money for all these things, but in less than a decade *fin-de-sièclism* will be old-fashioned, and we shall be face to face with the ideas and the tastes of the young century. But you cannot picture any society in which people did not want their dinners cooked, and their clothes made, and their children tended and taught; and it is not possible to believe that the world will alter so much in our time or the children's, that teachers in State schools will be superfluous, or that doctors of either sex will be without employment.

Among the crazes of the present day is the craze for teaching. Every one wants to teach; no one is content just to do. Women teach

painting because there is no market for their pictures; they teach dressmaking when they can't make a dress; and cooking when they never did a week's family cooking in their lives; and thrift though they can never balance their own petty cash book. The craze for teaching will of course pass, and bad times are in store for those who can do nothing. My advice to parents on this point is definite: never think your daughters are well equipped as teachers unless they could earn a living at doing the thing they talk so glibly about. If they can teach cooking as long as it is convenient, and cook directly there is no teaching to be done; if they can teach dressmaking now, and make their own and other people's dresses as soon as fashions shift; if they, who talk so pleasantly about children, can, when the time comes, care for children in the flesh; then you need not worry about future work and wages. There is always handiwork of that sort, and for useful work there is always wages.

(2) It is wise to put your daughters to something new, something that is only beginning to be taken up by women of education. The girls who go in for something new, while slower

witted women are waiting to hear what Mrs. Grundy will say about it; the girls who have pluck enough and character enough to say: "This is a profession for gentlewomen, because we mean to make it so;" these are the girls who pick up the best things, and who get superintendent's work and pay when a year or two hence crowds of other girls follow them. The world pays well for courage and enterprise, and those who have neither go without the wages thereof.

(3) Do not think to save time and labour by having your children taught first to be specialists, but teach them rather to be good all round, and then they can follow any special career for which their talents fit them, or for which there arises a demand. Here is a true story: some time ago, in the London dead season, I came across some dressmaker's apprentices starving for want of work. For years they had been sewing for a livelihood. I was about making a "pinafore" for an old sofa; they were sure they could not do it unless it was cut out and tacked together. I offered them a child's plain dress to make; two could have made the sleeves if I had cut them; another could have sewed

the skirt, but was doubtful about the pocket. I do not suppose that your daughter will become either a "skirt hand" or a "sleeve hand"; but I am sure that the more subjects she can teach, and the more things she is willing and able to do, the more sure she is of employment in an age when most workers are crippled by the narrowness of their capacities.

(4) There is always room and ease at the top of every ladder, and at the bottom there is always scrambling for a footing on the lowest rung. Therefore do not go into any profession unless you can get adequately trained for it. If you have little capital, do not choose a profession for which the training is costly and prolonged, nor one in which a condition of success is that you spend an income waiting for your name and fame. Don't go into a profession by the back door; it will be always remembered against you when at last, after infinite pains, you obtain admission to the drawing-room.

(5) Ascertain what is the average pay in the profession that you have fixed your thoughts upon; and also the average number

of years that a woman can go on at the work involved in it. Add to that the girl's private property, if any; or subtract from it the money that you expect she will give to her idle or her needy relatives. Set down opposite to it the average number of years in a woman's life. And gravely ponder the whole.

(6) Do not rush into the profession that looks from outside the most attractive, but go rather where there is work of any sort waiting to be done and few to do it. I do not say that you should neglect any decided gift, and I do say that you should strain every nerve to do the best for a child. But make sure that it is the best before you begin to strain. Decided gifts are not common, and they are apt to look much larger than they are in the close quarters of home. Many a mother fancies that her daughter has a real genius for painting, or for music, or for writing, or a wonderful voice for singing, when she really has nothing more than a pretty knack of no marketable value whatever. And there are no professions more overstocked than the few that can be followed by the unfortunate women who have mis-

taken a pleasant ornament for a marketable commodity.

(7) Look at the thing all round, and expect to find, as you surely will find, that there is a great deal in every profession that is disagreeable. You must take the rough with the smooth. No profession was made for your daughter; it is she who is going to be made into a member of a profession. You may take it for granted that she will alter in the making.

## CHAPTER VI

### PROFESSIONAL WAGES

“Send your gentle blood to the market, and see what it will buy.”

WHAT income may a single woman fairly expect to earn?

So wide a question will never get answered unless we limit its application. In the first place, then, I write only of women belonging to the well-to-do and educated classes; in the second I put aside women who are greatly above or far below the average level of capacity and intelligence. I am going to set down as plainly as I can some facts concerning the wages paid for professional work, done by the sort of women who come to me for advice, and for whom I have been writing since the beginning of this book. Until we know what wages a girl will earn, it is impossible to judge wisely

in the choice between this and that profession. And until we know what income a girl will have to live the greater part of her life upon, it is hard to say how we ought to bring her up now.

A true statement of the actual sum paid in a given time to any individual worker may be very misleading. Before we can say whether that represents high pay or low, we must take into account (1) the money sunk in training before any wages were earned; (2) the age at which the work is begun, and at which it will have to end; (3) the healthiness of the profession; (4) the regularity of the work; (5) the reward other than in money wages.

(1) A girl, leaving school, has £500 for her portion. It is not enough to live upon, and if she neither earns nor marries, she will be in a poor plight. We will suppose that she spends the whole of her capital on her training and education, and that she gets, as she may for that sum, the best that is to be had in England. On the completion of her training she must at once earn, and must not only live out of her earnings, but must also put by out of them for the rainy day and for old age. No doubt she



can readily get work, but if her health breaks down, or if she is out of work, she has only her savings to fall back upon. Would she have been better off if she had spent only part of her capital (say £200) on her training and had sunk the rest in a Government annuity, deferred or immediate, as you please? Working women's best energies are often crippled by the burden of anxiety, and with a small certainty behind her she would have faced the future with a lighter heart. Yet of course if, because she is so much better educated than most women, she can reckon securely on much better wages, and much more regular employment, she will do better to sink the money in herself. But will she get higher wages? Will she get regular work? Each case must be decided on its own merits; but, speaking generally, I should sink the money in the girl if she had a strong character, good health, and intelligence above the average; but given feeble health, or poor intellect, or a soft character, I am sure I should find it a better investment to sink the money in a Government annuity. But if it is a choice between giving a girl £500 worth of training, and muddling the £500

away in the general expenses of a family, I say without hesitation, give it to the girl; the worse she is equipped by nature, the more she wants all the aid you can give her; there is no doubt that a first-rate training is worth money, and worth having; the only question is whether an annuity or cash at the bank is not sometimes worth more. All other things being equal, the longer, the more difficult, the more risky, and the more expensive a training, the greater the wages, and the better the position to be earned at the end of it.

(2) Salaries are apt to be highest in those professions where training must begin early, and pay does not begin till late in life. If a girl is kept in training till she is five or six and twenty, she ought then to begin at a higher salary than her sister who went to work at eighteen, and has kept, or helped to keep, herself since she left school. I am not at all sure that if both girls have an equal share of the family wealth the one who begins to earn earliest will not be the best off in the end. But that is a comparison that seldom occurs in practice, for the two girls are not sisters, and even if they are, a girl is offered her

keep, and is not offered the cost of it as an alternative.

And be that as it may, the years between eighteen and twenty-five are few, and what any one can earn in them does not amount to much. The years after forty are many, and it is more important to know when a girl will have to leave off earning than when she is likely to begin. For some callings a woman is, or is considered, unfit when she has passed her first youth; in others the rate of pay goes down as a woman loses the freshness of her looks. Clearly, a girl ought for such work as this at the beginning to be better paid than her sister, who will find promotion when she is middle-aged. One does not expect young people to look far forward, nor to sacrifice an immediate offer of pocket money for the sake of what will happen to them when they have gray hair and a portly figure; by that time they are sure they will be comfortably married to the man of their dreams. But the old folk must look before and after, laying out their money and their chances to the best advantage.

(3) Anybody can see that unhealthy work,

which the average woman can only go on at for, say, ten years, ought to be better paid than work which she could do till she was sixty. The best way to find out whether a profession is healthy or unhealthy is to go to a good insurance office, offering to insure the life of a member of the profession. Next, one may go to a friendly society conducted on a commercial basis, and try to get the same person into a sick club. The greater the chances of early death or of frequent sickness, the more you have to pay. Or you may even find that the profession about which you wish to inquire is such an unhealthy one that you can't get admitted into a sick club at any price. I do not say that unhealthy work always *is* well paid, but only that it ought to be, and that an unhealthy and ill-paid profession is not one for a girl to go into if she has no money behind her. Sentiment and fashion often combine to push down for a time the rate of pay in any one profession. Sick-nursing, for instance, is among the most unhealthy of occupations, and yet it is one of the worst paid, and the most overstocked; and so long as the supply of nurses keeps up, the pay is sure to keep down.

It is at present the one way in which an upper class woman may spend her life in doing hard manual labour, and yet may hold her position in society. In an unhealthy profession, a girl will be often out of work, so that her nominal earnings do not represent her actual salary, and it costs much to be ill, so that her money does not go far. There are doctor's bills, and physic, and change of air to be deducted, and not one ha'porth of pleasure to be had out of the whole lot. And though an unhealthy profession may seem attractive to young folks, who look on life from outside, we know that no profession continues to be agreeable when you are without either health or money.

(4) I am often told that such and such a woman earns a very large salary. But when I come to pry into details, I find that she did once earn that large income in one year, and that she lives in continual hopes of earning it again; or that the sum stated as her average weekly income was, in reality, her earnings during one week, in the height of her season, or when she had a run of luck; or that her gross receipts have been quoted to me as if they were her net receipts, *i.e.* as if that

was her income after instead of before her professional expenses were paid out. It does not answer to be thought poor, or at any rate it is thought not to answer; and the consequence is that women tell you when they are doing well, and hold their tongues and pinch in silence when they are doing badly. Employers, as well as other people, are like a lot of sheep; they follow where the first one leads; and if a woman can't get any one to employ her and publishes the fact, she may stand idle for ever. No; if a woman wants work she must run about and look for it, and she must go well dressed, holding her head high; and though she may dine off a bun at the pastrycook's, she must talk bravely about grouse and whitebait.

Job work is generally paid better than piece work of equal merit; but when at the end of the year you reckon the takings of the job worker, you will generally find that the regular worker has pocketed more. Women with brains, determined to rise, often prefer job work in their early days for the sake of the spare time, in which they can, if they will, qualify themselves for something higher. But for one woman who does this, there are a hundred who take

job work at any rate of pay, because they hate to stick to anything steadily; and who, so far from using their spare time to economise their money, spend their money to make the spare time pass; who, so far from working in their spare time towards the promise of a better position, get into idle ways in their spare time, and cannot work well when a job comes round once more.

We cannot get away from human nature, which is pitifully alike in all classes; and though we are talking of a very different class of the community, we are confronted with the same problems as those which beset the path of those who try to find work for "the unemployed." Your working man earns high wages for a few weeks, then goes off on the spree, eats, drinks, attends a music hall, and lays not a penny by for old age, nor even to tide him over the time till the next job comes again. And your "educated" woman, coming to an end of the term's work, goes for a change or a holiday, buys books, fine clothes, or sweetmeats, as her taste suggests, sees all the plays that are "on," lays not a penny by, and picking up the next job, teaches new ideas to shoot after her own pattern.

Considering what people are, regular work with a regular salary is the best thing for the girls; it does not matter if the salary is small so long as it is sure. And perhaps, best of all, are those wages from which a part is withheld to pay the cost of a pension after a certain number of years of work. When women are compelled to put by for their old age, and have no choice in the matter, they generally do.

(5) Work that is pleasant, or that brings one in contact with very agreeable persons, or that confers a desirable position, or that is otherwise thought well of by the majority—that “leaves one one’s own mistress,” for instance, whatever that may mean—is not apt to be well paid. The fact is, we are all sweated, in one sense of that hard-worked word. The world pays us just enough money to overcome our reluctance to the piece of work that it wants to have done. If the work were so pleasant that we would rather do it than not do it, why should we be paid at all? Some kinds of hard work are never paid for—the playing of games, for example. You do not go about the world wailing for an employer who will pay you a guinea a day in return for your labours on the links or



the tennis ground. Yet it is hard work and you go at it very persistently. If our reluctance to a job is small, the pay is small to match. If the job is such that few people can or will undertake it, then the pay rises, and goes on rising till some one who cares greatly to have the money, or does not mind doing the work so much as most folk, accepts the job and the pay together. One would think that this very obvious application of the law of supply and demand would come unaided into every woman's mind. And yet I find that there is nothing I oftener have to point out to the would-be working women who come to me for advice. They tell me that they want "a nice salary"; and that they can't keep body and soul together on the wages paid in most professions. Then I suggest a profession where the wages run high.

"Oh! but I shouldn't *like* to do that," they exclaim. "I would *rather not* undertake that part of the work." "Oh! but *I* wish to have my evenings to myself." Or, "The pay is all right; but I don't care for the position." Or, "That won't suit me; I want to live in London."

Of course you would "rather not"; every

employer knows that. Of course there is a good deal in the work that nobody could "like." That is why the man who wants the work done offers such high pay to the doer. If he could get it done for next to nothing, do you think he would offer to pay you, a stranger, handsomely? You tell me that you want the money. If so, earn it, and be thankful that the work has fallen in your way; if you don't want the money, leave it and the work together, and cease whining to me about your poverty. As for a good position and "evenings out," of course you would rather have both than go without either; so would every other woman you know. And you may take it for granted that every one wants to live in London. But no man or woman is paid both in meal and in malt; and the professions where there are a great many privileges and a very easy life are sure to be crowded with workers who have money to spend, and only want something to do; and who seldom strive, even as much as they ought to strive, to keep up the rate of women's pay. You, who want money to spend, and would rather not have anything to do, cannot afford to compete with them.

I cannot give the sums earned in every profession ; but if I give the sums actually earned in some of the best known and most popular professions, we may assume that we have before us fair average pay ; and that the girls in whom we are interested cannot expect to earn more.

The teaching profession is now closed to all but highly trained aspirants, so that every woman who teaches in a High School or Board School has had money and time, often a large sum of money and a long time, spent upon her. And the ranks of High School mistresses are over rather than under stocked. If you seek one woman to teach any subject, you will be offered your choice between half-a-dozen. What will you have to pay ? One of the largest employers of this class of labour is The Girls' Public Day School Company. A head mistress in the Company's service gets a fixed salary of £250, with a capitation fee for every girl over the first 100 ; that may mean the bare £250 in a small school, or it may mean £500 or £600 in a large one. It sounds handsome, but there are very few of such posts, and there are hundreds of capable assistant mistresses in the Company's service who have no more real chance

of becoming a head mistress than I have myself. For an assistant mistress a salary of over £135 is an exception, even after years of work ; and a woman who has not a University degree or its equivalent can never count upon a salary of over £100. There has been an endeavour to bind all University women together in an agreement never to take less than £100, and it has not altogether succeeded. It is difficult to say at what salary non-University women begin, because it is considered a good thing for them to get into the Company's service at any salary ; and those who take the least are not the most ready to talk about it. Specialists may get a little more, but then they must offer special talent, which is rare, or special training, which costs money. And though a teacher of music or drawing, or gymnastics, may earn at an early age more than her fellows who do the harder work of a form mistress, she has no chance of a headship ; the prizes of the profession are not for her. There are a few public endowed schools that pay large salaries, and their salaries are brought under notice by advertisement in the public newspapers ; but as a rule, directly one goes outside the Company's service, the ten-

dency is for salaries to fall alarmingly. I saw an advertisement last week for a head mistress with a University degree at a salary of £110, and I have no doubt there will be plenty of applications. I am acquainted with a head mistress who gets £150 and no rooms; and with a second mistress who gets £90; I expect they will both draw these salaries till they are past work and retire on their savings. It is all very well to say that companies and private individuals should pay more for having their children taught; but if the pay or the work, or both together, in the teaching profession is not better than outside it, why do women of good attainments flock into it in such numbers? Salaries go down rather than up, and yet the supply of teachers is greater than ever.

Women of education have not hitherto cared to teach in Board and Church Schools earning Government Grant. Yet, all things considered the pay is little if at all behind that of the High Schools. The cost of living as well as of training is much less, the work is in many ways less harassing, and the hours are not so long. Head mistresses may earn £200 or £300, and house-rent is often free. But to

go in for this sort of teaching one must make up one's mind early; one cannot go on till twenty with the ordinary routine education of a middle-class girl, and drop into a Board School if one does not marry.

Then there is private teaching, in its many varieties. Successful specialists make a handsome, though often irregular income, whether as private coaches, or as teachers of music, dancing, and the like. But these are the few, having a talent for getting on, if not talent of other kinds, and they form a small minority in an overcrowded refuge for the destitute and incapable. The majority of daily teachers are paid no more than pocket money wages, and they work under soul-destroying conditions, knowing that if they object to the treatment they receive, or refuse the pay that is offered to them, a hundred other women will to-morrow be scrambling for their leavings. Women of all classes are willing to pay very highly for what, by a strange misnomer, they call their "freedom." It often means severe coercion into living meagrely, going out in all weathers, and at all hours; getting old before one's time, and starving when one is too old

to work. We often blame girls of the ignorant classes because they choose daily work of any sort and at any wage rather than domestic service, where they would have a good bed to lie upon, good food to eat, shelter and a good fire; and where they would learn what would fit them for marriage, should that come in their way. We blame them, but our own girls do the like. "Freedom" means licence to ramp about the streets, and to be out late at night; to begin at either end of one's own crust; to neglect those quiet and unexciting arts that make a home; and perhaps also to look out on one's own ground for a possible husband.

Because few women prefer to be resident teachers, they get better pay; in fact they get besides their board and lodging as much as the non-resident get without it; and nevertheless the resident teacher is more difficult to find. We may say that the pay of a resident teacher comes between £20 and £100, and that a woman earning £20 has more spare cash and fewer personal expenses than the High School mistress who must keep herself and dress well out of a salary of £90. And one must remem-

ber that the resident governess who takes £20 has never had an education that would fit her for the lowest posts in a High School ; and that women highly educated according to modern ideas will so seldom go into a private family that when they do they may demand what pay they choose.

And since we are on the subject of resident work, I take leave to point out that considering the age at which it begins, the number of years one can go on at it, and the outlay, there is no work for women better paid than domestic service. Your housemaid, to whom you give £20 a year, is better warmed and far better fed, has more pocket money, can afford to dress better, and will keep her rosy cheeks later in life than your daughter whom you train or half train for some work that she has to go out to in all weathers, coming home at night on foot to the sort of lodging that can be paid for out of her weekly wage.

But you couldn't make your daughter a housemaid? Perhaps not; though our times have seen many more surprising transformations in women's lives. But if you could do it, you would get the wages thereof, which



are high ; and until you do it, perhaps you had better not say much about your housemaid dressing soberly according to her means ; if it comes to that, she can afford the fine clothes as well as you and your daughter can, and I am willing to believe that, on account of your greater culture, you and she care for them less.

Competition is frightful and the pay wretched in all those callings that can be pursued at odd times and more or less secretly at home. At one time every woman who wanted money and did not know how to get it, offered to do plain needlework ; then there was a spell of crewels and embroidery ; now they advertise for typewriting at 1s. per 1,000 words. Yet even this change shows which way the wind is blowing ; for typewriting is a trade that it costs a few pounds to learn, and a new typewriter means an outlay of twenty pounds. A good typewriting and shorthand clerk gets about 17s. 6d or £1 per week, but then she must go out to her work, and do it at her employer's time.

Women secretaries earn from 10s. a week onwards. There can be but few secretaries in London who earn £100 a year, without board, and those who do are always possessed

of special qualifications gained in years of work or years of study. And secretaries are expected now to know book-keeping, typewriting, and shorthand, with one or two languages; all of which means outlay of time and money.

Clerks in the General Post Office begin at £65 a year, and go on rising to £100, or even higher, and there is a pension at the end of long service. But they must live in the neighbourhood of London, and must pass a competitive examination between eighteen and twenty. It is a good thing to go in for, but, like other good things, it is not open to those who wait till five-and-twenty or thirty years of age, hoping that something will turn up.

There are now a few women clerks in the Bank of England, working under rather better rates of pay. And there is great competition for clerks' work in a large office in London, where the pay begins at £35, and where many women never rise beyond £65. There are, however, some privileges, which makes the actual pay rather more than the nominal pay. One fortnight's holiday is given in the year, besides the Bank holidays.

There are now a few, and it is expected that

there may presently be many, posts open to women under the Local Government Board. The salaries run up to £300 a year, and down to £50 or £60. Special training and qualifications are of course demanded.

Lecturers under the County Councils may, often after a short, cheap, and inadequate training, get £60 or £80 for a year's lectures. But no one can say how long the demand for such lecturers will continue, and already the supply of teachers of a sort exceeds the demand. For good work of the kind the pay is high ; but we must remember that a worker who is never at home finds her personal expenses heavy, and that excellence above average everywhere commands above average pay.

Perhaps I have said enough to show that a large number of women who work, and who do good work of a kind, never earn more than £1 or 30s. a week, and that they must live upon it, *plus* the interest of any money their relations may give or leave them. The women who earn £150 a year are few ; and those who get up to £200 are a very small percentage indeed of the total number of workers. And once more I say that these wages, small though you and I think

them, are the wages of women who profess to be able to do one thing very well, and that the women who can't do any one thing well are not worth any wage at all. To earn even £1 a week you must put your daughter to work early, or you must spend years and money in getting her trained well. For unskilled labour there is no demand and no wage.

Of course there are women in London who earn thousands. If you can do a thing that nobody else can do, and that the public will have, you can get what rate of pay you choose. *The* singer or *the* writer of the day can always strike, and her strike can never be broken up by an inrush of workers who will take the place and the pay that she refuses. But most of us can afford to leave out of consideration what will happen to us when we have wits beyond ordinary. The cleverest woman is heavily handicapped if she starts on her upward struggle with no training; and though (to return to our examples) *the* writer of the day may have worked her way up with little or no aid, *the* singer has had a very long and careful training. In all professions where there are great prizes of which we hear, there are also

dead blanks, of which we take no notice. And I very much doubt whether the average rate of pay for singers and writers is as high as that of the humdrum clerk or teacher. It is impossible to prove a statement for or against, but I expect that we should find the average rate of pay poorest in the most showy and attractive callings. And I often have to impress upon parents the truth that they have no right to expect that their children will do more than average well.

Once in these modern times there was a school boy, whose father reprov'd him because he never got to the top of his class. "I can't think, Jack," said papa, "why you always let yourself be beaten by a little fellow like that Smith!"

"But then, you see," said Jack, thoughtfully, "Smith has got a senior wrangler for a father, and I've only got you."

So many things go to make success. Will your daughter be fairly content with average success and average pay in this profession that she is to enter?

## CHAPTER VII

### THE GIRLS' MONEY

“If thy son can make ten pound his measure,  
Then all thou addest may be called his treasure.”

MOTHERS come to me, confessing their anxiety about their daughters' future. When we have talked a little while, it becomes clear that all their anxieties gather round the thought of the money that the girls will have, or will not have, when they are left alone to take care of themselves. If any person would settle an annuity on the girls, the sun would seem to break through the clouds, and I should never hear the end of the story; for mothers don't come to a friend for advice unless money difficulties press them hard.

I find no fault with their view of the question. For it is a comfort, in so perplexing a world, to find one solid, immovable

resting-place for our minds ; and this one thing is certain—let the future of a daughter be what it may, she will always have to spend money. Married or single, young or old, capable or foolish, a woman must have clothes, a roof over her head, and bread to eat ; and it is the first duty of those who bring children into the world to provide them with these necessities of life, or with the means of procuring such necessities.

I have said elsewhere my say about earning money ; now I assume that the money, little or much, of her own earning or some one else's, is in the woman's hand, and I wonder how she is going to spend it. Whether she is a poor woman or a rich one, much of her life's happiness depends on her spending wisely. Nay ; the fact of her being a rich woman or a poor one has less to do with the amount of money put into her hands than with the amount of wisdom in spending contained in herself. If a poor woman does not know how to spend her little, she is stinted at home and begs abroad ; if a rich woman does not know how to spend her riches, they do her no good, and do harm to others. And wisdom in spending moderate

means lifts one straight out of poverty into affluence. For wealth is not absolute, as many take it to be; it implies a relation between our wants and our means of gratifying them.

So when mothers lament over the uncertainty of the future, when they tell me that they do not know how to train their daughters because they do not know what sort of life the daughters will lead, I often ask them how it would be if they began by training the girls to manage an income? That knowledge is sure to come in useful. Unless and until a girl goes to the workhouse, she must have some money to spend and some money to keep; therefore why not teach her when and how to spend money, and where and how to keep it? It is likely that she will end her life in the social position that her parents occupy; but it is possible that any girl may marry a man greatly above her parents' position, or far below it; she may earn or inherit a fortune, or, having a fortune, she may lose it; she may have to cater for a family, or to provide for herself alone; she may be single and poor, with no one to advise her; or, being single and rich, she may find herself a mark



for all the money-grabbers and fortune-hunters of her acquaintance. Any one of these fates might befall any girl, but go where she will, so long as the world is constituted as it is, she will always have money to manage.

From another point of view I think mothers are not far wrong when they say that if the money question can be satisfactorily settled the girls will get through the world comfortably. Think of all the people you know who worry themselves ill, or who, being well in health, are continually unhappy in mind! And then think what it is that they worry about, and why they look so careworn and wretched. Nine times out of ten there's money in the mischief somewhere. They can't make two ends meet. Their money has all gone, and comfort has not come in its stead. Their capital has disappeared, and they are the last people who can explain where it went to. One can hardly say that they have spent their money, for to spend means to exchange, and they have had nothing. Nor have they given their money away, for they say they are too poor to give to anybody; to receive is more in their habits. No matter what ought

to be done, they have not the money to do it with. A boy ought to be apprenticed; they can't raise the fee. A girl should go to school; they declare it is out of the question. The mother is ill, but she can't afford a holiday. The father is overworked, but he daren't slacken rein. You go in to a meal, and there is nothing much to eat. You offer to take one of the girls out, and she has to refuse because she has nothing fit to put on. The children are not stupider than other children, but they lose chance after chance for the want of a little ready money to seize hold of it with; and they sink down and down, as indeed for the good of humanity such incapables should. Finally the father dies; the family, broken up, is tossed penniless on the world. The hat is held round, and friends and acquaintance contribute each a trifle. The girls are put into something where they earn a pittance, they who could never make even a fair income suffice. And they hang first on one and then on another, accepting a little here and a little there, beggars and cadgers to the day they die.

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“Poor things!” say their friends. “They had

no vices, and it is very hard." To muddle the means of life may not be a vice ; nevertheless muddlers pay a cruel penalty in a highly civilised society, and it must be so, for theirs are the faults destructive of all society ; they retain, or hark back to, the characteristics of savages. And if it be not a vice to beg and cadge, the practice ends by making the cadger vicious.

"Poor things!" with all my heart. They are, and for ever must remain, poor. These muddlers always have an idea that their circumstances are at fault. They tell you that if they had a larger income they could manage well. And yet every one knows that she who cannot manage the income she has would only make a worse failure with a larger income. Every one knows that the more you give to a habitual beggar, the sooner he will come complaining at your door again. It is a matter of common knowledge that into that muddly house has gone regularly an income that not only ought in theory to keep such a family in every comfort and in some luxury, but which does actually in practice keep another family of the same size in such a way that they have earned

the reputation of being exceedingly well-to-do. And so, in point of fact, they are ; for wealth depends less upon what we have, than upon our knowing how to spend what we have.

Take another example, fitting our subject closer. Two women earn the same income at the same work, as school teachers if you will. One has a nice home, always looks plump and rosy, always wears suitable and becoming clothes, and yet has a little sum laid by for the rainy day. No doubt the existence of the said sum has something to do with the plump and smiling face, but as it has all come out of the income we may fairly reckon it among things bought. If you call for half a crown it is forthcoming ; if you talk about a new book, it is lying on the table. Presently you find that this woman out of her income constantly finds means to help those who are poor. Not for a moment would she or any one apply that adjective to herself. But in all good faith she has sometimes helped her colleague who is poor, though she does the same work on the same wages.

This colleague lives in pokey rooms, saying that she's so miserably paid she can't afford

anything better; she looks as if she hadn't proper food to eat; she hasn't a penny to turn to in an emergency; her face is lined and careworn by thinking of her present debts and her penniless future. She can't go into any sort of society on account of the shabbiness of her clothes; whatever occasion presents itself, that is the very occasion her wardrobe is not prepared for. Yet she seems to have no large extravagances, and one can't get out of the difficulty, as one might do if she were a man, by saying that she speculates. Take a piece of paper, and try to reckon up where her money goes to, and neither you nor she can do it. I have tried to do such a thing many times, with and without the aid of the spendthrift in question, but I have always utterly failed.

"But what *have* you bought?" I say, dismayed. "Do think!" I look round the room, with some vague idea that there may be some rare or costly object unsuspected in a corner. "There must be something, you know."

The answer is a shake of the head. Baffled, we put the piece of paper behind the fire. There is nothing to be done. The habit of muddling money is an incurable habit in a

middle-aged woman; and, so far as my experience goes, it is a habit generally incompatible with happiness, or with usefulness of a high order. No woman can think of two things at once, and if she is always thinking of how two ends won't meet, her mind is not ready for the reception of any other thought.

I am well prepared for the common and very foolish remark that will be made here. I shall be told that thriftiness, or the power of managing money, comes by nature to some girls and not to all; that when Celia and Agatha had as girls an allowance, Celia was always well dressed, and Agatha was always out at elbows; or that when Elizabeth, Betsy, and Bess were tiny children, Elizabeth spent her pennies, Betsy saved hers in a money-box, while Bess came home crying because she had dropped hers in the gutter. Of course that is true; no sensible person doubts it. But it is no truer of thriftlessness than of a hundred other faults which you can and do eradicate from the list of the child's misfortunes. I am even willing of my own accord to carry the remark further, and to point out that to muddle, and also to manage money, is a habit which runs in

families, and that, like many other family peculiarities, it is partly inherited, partly educated, partly imitated from the people among whom we live. What is all that but to say that though no two children are alike, two sisters are more often alike than two girls nowise related? One child is passionate, the other sweet-tempered. One is dirty, the other prefers to be clean, even though soap does get into the eyes. One child never tells a lie, the other cannot be depended upon to speak the truth. We are all acquainted with dirty families, with ill-tempered families, with families where truth does not reign. We none of us can say with any precision how much of these undesirable propensities comes by inheritance, and what part might have been avoided by suitable training. But we have made up our minds that uncleanness, and lying, and evil tempers are faults so grave that they hinder a useful or a good life. And therefore we do not sit down in the face of them with our hands folded. On the contrary, we set ourselves with patience and determination to root them out. We say to ourselves, and to the child when she is old enough to understand,

"If you don't get over this temptation, it will be a source of misery to you all your life long." And in the end we succeed, according as we have been more or less persevering and wise.

Why not pursue the same plan when a girl shows signs of being naturally extravagant and wasteful? These faults, if they stick to her, will, without doubt, be a source of misery to her all her life long. And all children begin alike in that they are all inclined to be wasteful; they all live entirely in the present. It is not natural to any one to be provident, to forego pleasant things to-day, for the sake of somebody or something else to-morrow. One cannot even think of a provident savage, because in so far as he begins to provide for the morrow he ceases to be savage. Savage propensities of all kinds come out stronger in one child than in another; and it is sad for the child who is afflicted with more than an average share; but the saddest lot is to have no mother or teacher who will aid the effort to struggle on to a higher plane of existence.

Now for the practical part of the matter. If a girl is to be taught to manage money, how is she to be taught? All power comes by



exercise. The girls can't learn to do anything unless they try to do it, and keep on trying. We do badly at first, presently better, and at last well. If you wish your girls to know how to spend money, you must give them money to spend. It is absurd to expect a girl who has never had a five-pound note of her own, suddenly to spend her husband's money with wisdom and economy. A woman who has not been trusted to buy so much as her own clothes, cannot be fit to keep herself out of fire and water, though she is middle-aged before she is left an orphan.

The earlier the girls begin to learn their lesson, the better they will learn it; and it matters less if they make mistakes (as at first they must do) in very small responsibilities. Make a child some money allowance and make her buy out of it some trifle for her own use. It does not matter what the allowance is. Mothers sometimes tell me that they think my plan excellent, only not for themselves, because they have not money enough to allow the girls anything. Ah me! It is not merely the girls who are muddlers, and who fail to see that two and two make four. I am asking that

the girl shall buy herself some necessary, and I ask only that you should put into her hands what you spend on that necessary for her now, *plus* the odd coppers or shillings that you are in the habit of giving her "to spend." I do not ask for one penny more than that. I shall not pity the girl one bit if she has a tight fit to make two ends meet. For if you have no money now, you can have none to leave her; and if she is going to be poor all her life she had best learn betimes the way to be poor and happy. But, my dear madam, surely I did not hear you say that, poor as you are, you do not know what you *do* spend on the girl? Where is your account book? If you are that kind of manager yourself, pray let the girls have a chance of learning ways of management better than your own; else there is a poor look-out for them all.

Nor does it in the least matter what has to be bought. It is the habit of dissociating the idea of money from that of use that is so pernicious, and that dogs the steps of girls who have never had anything more than odd shillings to spend on rubbish or sweets.

What does matter is that the allowance shall

be fixed and fair, and not supplemented, either in money or kind; and that out of its large or small margin shall come the child's charities and the presents that it is a pleasure to every child to give. All incomes have their limits, but many women seem to think that incomes bigger than their own are limitless; they have not learned that spending implies choice, that buying this thing, we choose, by the same token, to go without that. The habit of denying one's self to help others lies at the foundation of Christian virtue; and though there is little enough of it, or of other fundamental virtues, in the child who is born with a turn for extravagance, it may be cultivated even in her, if one takes pains enough. Thriftless people never give readily, nor do they ever give much; but that is a negative quality. The first thing is to teach the children to live honestly, at their own charges; you may never succeed in teaching them to give gladly, but you may teach them not to take greedily.

The allowance is to be fixed and not supplemented. Sometimes mothers supplement a child's allowance in order to save annoyance to themselves. Many women feel it a severe

penalty to take a child out visiting in shabby gloves, or in none ; or to send a girl to a smart party when she hasn't a new frock ; and so, with more or less grumbling, they buy the frock or the gloves, and stupidly wonder that the child adopts the same easy method of supplying her wants on future occasions. I can only say that if mothers begin to give way to the perpetual temptation to do what is easiest to themselves instead of what is best for the children, there is an end of all training. It is the inexorableness of arithmetic that makes its study so excellent a mental discipline. Let the child bear the natural consequence of unwise spending, *i.e.* to go without the things it would be better to have. We talk much, rubbish and otherwise, about punishments. Be thankful that you have here a punishment natural enough to satisfy the most rigid of the theorists, severe enough to prevent recurrence of the fault, and yet absolutely harmless in its after effects upon mind and body.

Whatever you do, if you really wish to make your girls capable in their dealings with money, don't, while they are young and impressionable, carefully reward them for thriftlessness

If you are determined to supplement a girl's income, give more money to the girl who manages well what you have entrusted to her care. That is how she will be handled in real life when you are dead and gone, and you pretend to wish to fit her for life. "To them that have shall be given, and from them that have not shall be taken away even that they have." It is a very old rule. How would it be to put it in practice? At any rate our present plan can't be said to work out well. Very few women of the middle-classes are even reasonably good at the job; and we are all agreed that the next generation must learn to do better if it is to keep its head above the rising waters of democracy.

Begin early, and as soon as one lesson is mastered set a harder one. As a girl grows older, increase her income, and the responsibilities attached thereto. Let a girl who has left school buy her own clothes, with the help of as much advice and guidance as her mother thinks fit to bestow. If the mother is a good manager herself, which does not follow as a matter of course, the girl will soon get into the family ways; and if the mother is a bad

manager—a not impossible case—the girl has at least the opportunity of buying wisdom and experience at a cheap rate. The worst that can happen is that she goes badly dressed for a year or two, and wisdom is well worth that small price.

Let it be clearly understood that young 'folks are entrusted with money as a means to an end, and that the end is wisdom and not pleasure. Girls often do very foolish things with their money, and their parents laugh, saying, "Oh! it is her own money; let the child get what pleasure she can out of it!"

And so the children get a notion that if money is only legally their own no duty attaches to the spending thereof; they squander and waste, nevertheless reckoning themselves good citizens and exemplary Christians. Do not encourage even a small child to spend for the sake of spending, but set her the example of spending only when she needs the thing bought. To wish for a thing, even not a very wise thing, and to save up the price of it, and then to buy it, is a good lesson. Not so to have a coin in one's pocket, and to flatten one's nose against window panes until at last

one spies some object that the coin can be exchanged for. Shop windows are a standing temptation in modern life. You pray that the children may be led out of temptation; don't get up from your knees, and take the children by the hand, and lead them straight in. Hundreds of women wreck their homes because they are overmastered by the habit of buying what is set out like a trap in shop windows to catch their wandering fancy.

But to return to our girl in training. Insist that she shall pay cash down for everything. Do not let her get into the bad habit of running up bills, nor of paying at the beginning of each quarter for the clothes that she has worn during the past one. If she has not the money to pay for the things she would like, let her wait until she has; the discipline of waiting will do her ten times the good that any new clothes could possibly have done. There is no habit that stands a woman in better stead through life than the habit of paying ready money. And it is a habit that becomes a second nature; once you've got it, you would no more think of buying a dress that you could not pay for on the nail, than

you would of stealing a dress that you coveted. Muddling managers are of all sorts and ages; but this they all have in common, they all run up bills, and they never have the pleasure of possession, for their money is always owing to some one else before it comes to them.

Make the girl keep an account of what she spends, and make her balance the account at stated intervals. Of course every one knows that some girls are very stupid at accounts, but that is all the more reason for persevering. A girl not deficient in intellect can be taught to keep ordinary accounts, if you take her in hand early and keep on till you are successful; and if the girl is really deficient, one may comfort one's self by remembering that she probably will not, and certainly ought not, ever to have a house of her own, nor household accounts to manage.

We agreed in a previous chapter to consider all girls from a matrimonial point of view. Is there anything that so often leads to family strife as the coming in of bills at the end of the half year? Bickering and soreness begin about the spending of money, and the first quarrel is seldom the last. Dozens of women



dread asking for money as they dread doing a sin. Dozens of households are stretched from roof to cellar in the vain effort to make two ends meet. But the dread and the stretching are both unknown to those who have the habit of taking a fixed sum on a definite day, and of spending that sum and no more. What you haven't money to pay for you go without, and the trouble is over as soon as the thing would have been used. No doubt many men are tiresome and unreasonable about money matters, but that's the other side of the question. We might remember that if the man gives out, the woman lays out the money; that if a husband's business is to earn, a wife's is to spend; that the man generally makes some attempt to learn his business, while the wife seldom tries to learn hers, except at the expense of the partnership; and that there can be few things more aggravating to a man than to earn money, presumably as much as he can, and then to find that he does not get any comfort in exchange for it.

Don't bicker about money, for it is a very catching complaint. You make the girl pay ready money; set her a good example and pay

ready money to her. You would, I hope, reprove her if she wrangled or grumbled with her creditors before she paid them; do not you wrangle and grumble at her when pay day comes. Grumbling never yet lessened a bill nor swelled a balance. And the habit of paying just debts grudgingly is what makes people mean and grasping. Either you ought to pay or you ought not. If you ought to pay, the money does not belong to you; if you ought not, be stout in your refusal, and don't waste time talking about it. If you have promised to pay the girl more than you can afford, blame yourself, not her, and agree in future to pay less and cheerfully. And do not make any great effort to give a girl an unduly large allowance for her clothes. It is the greatest mistake to talk about letting her have her pleasure now since she can't have it always, and so on. She will not be in the least more happy with a lot of money than with less; the thing that makes her happy is to train her habits to go within her means.

If you have no money to leave her when you die, it is kinder to let her spend less, and to put the balance into safe keeping for her future. Nay; even if you throw the money

away, it is far kinder not to train a girl in expensive personal habits which she will have no means of gratifying in later life. Many a girl has refused a good husband, or, having married a good husband, has made him and herself miserable, because though his income was enough for many women to be happy on, it was not enough for her.

I started with the determination to tell the plain truth, however ugly it might look when written down. And we all know why great efforts are made to give an unduly large dress allowance to girls of marriageable age. To quote the old, vulgar saying, parents "set them off to get them off." It is urged that if portionless girls were dressed according to their means or lack of means they would not be sufficiently attractive to find a husband; that if a girl has money in the bank nobody knows it, and if she has money on her back everybody sees it; and, apart from personal charm, every one is apt to think that so well dressed a girl has a portion to come. The money put into the bank would not give much of a maintenance, whereas the money laid out on clothes *may* procure a lifelong maintenance for the wearer.

Whether such considerations should weigh with mothers who profess "to be true and just in all their dealings" is a question; that such considerations do weigh is a fact; for my part, I have always thought that the reverse side of those motives operates against marriage. I am told that men are afraid to marry. It seems to me that they have ground for fear (granting its existence) when so many women expect to take out of the family exchequer a sum out of all proportion to that which they bring into it. Anyway, I am oftenest called upon to advise the women who, for one cause or another, have not married, and are not likely to; and I say that it is very cruel and very unfair to bring up girls so that they cannot live comfortably upon the money their parents can leave them, nor upon the money they can earn.

Take the girl into your confidence about the family income. Let her know what you can leave her, and teach her how to lay out that sum to advantage. I could tell of dozens of middle-aged women who have not the slightest idea what their income will be ten years hence. And when their parents die we shall all be less surprised than they are to find that there is

next to nothing to come to them. And take the girl into your confidence about the family capital as soon as she is old enough to understand. Married or single, women have their own money nowadays, and they need to be taught how to take care of it. The financial world is full of sharks, who not only have the capacious swallow of the aquatic variety, but a gift for fair promises, unfettered by any regard for the truth. It is all very well to bring girls up to be trustful, but it is safer to teach them also that for money some men will tell lies even in print, and that faith does not land us in paradise if it is bestowed promiscuously on the inhabitants of a fallen world. Teach to the girls the outline of the laws that govern commercial transactions; or else teach them to be content with government security and a small gain. Women who "don't know and can't be bothered" about investments should not envy the wages of bother and knowledge. And women who can't afford to lose should not gamble on the Stock Exchange, or otherwise.

I say that girls ought to be trained in the spending of money. When one comes to think about it, one sees that they often are carefully

trained in very expensive habits. The food they eat, the clothes they wear, and the maids who mend them; the wine they drink, the houses they live in, and the servants who run at their bidding cost money out of all proportion to any woman's earnings, and to most women's inheritance. Presently they will be left alone in the world, and straightway they must begin to eat food less dainty, to wear clothes less perfect, to walk where they have ridden, and to break the habits of a lifetime every time they go shopping. Where would a couple of hundred a year be to keep them as they are accustomed to be kept? And yet how many men in these bad times can be sure of leaving £200 a year apiece to each of the children? And if it comes to earning, how small is the chance for most women of earning even £100 a year, not to speak of £200? It is a hard trial for a woman whose habits have been so long to crystallise, and it is a perfectly gratuitous trial. Circumstances may compel parents to deprive children of luxuries, but no circumstances can compel parents to bring children up in luxuries that they cannot leave them reasonable chances of procuring all their lives long.

## CHAPTER VIII

### MARRIAGE

“Marry thy daughter, and so shalt thou have performed a weighty matter.”

VENTURING upon a thorny subject, and yet one that I dare not put on one side, I set down, here at the outset, several propositions, with which I think most sensible persons will agree. At any rate, those who do not agree with me will know where I stand, and need not trouble themselves to go quarrelling on to the end of the chapter.

(1) To be happily married is the best possible fate that can befall a girl: physical and mental completion alike are to be found that way, and often that way alone.

(2) To be unhappily married is the worst of all possible fates; the most certain to ruin the physical health and to degrade the moral power.

(3) To be married either happily or unhappily is an impossible fate for many English girls, especially for some girls of the middle and upper classes.

(4) To be married is a fate for which some girls are unfit, by reason of their physical or mental constitution.

“ Ah ! yes,” a perplexed mother will say. “ I am certain of that much, but that’s useless knowledge, and all the rest’s a mere matter of chance. And I am not in the least interested in many girls ; I have but three ; nor in some girls for whom other women are responsible. If only, by reference to general rule or particular instance, you could tell me about my girls, which will marry, and what I’m to do with the one who doesn’t get married, that might be useful. At present, Providence seems, in this line, to work without law or order. People are fond of talking about “ Law ” nowadays ; I wish they’d explain one to me ! The girls who, you’d think, were cut out for old maids marry straight off, and the most attractive women live and die single. There can be no rule. No foresight or management is of the slightest use. Whatever future I



prepare my girls for, I feel certain that's the very thing they won't do. And then I shall have wasted my money and their lives. Marriage a lottery! I'm sure when we spend money on girls, that is putting into a lottery; it may bring any return or none!"

It is something to begin discussion of this thorny subject with a definite agreement on a few facts. And since you complain that the whole affair is a matter of chance, we will pick out the one item which is not a matter of chance, but of fact—and of fact easily ascertained by those who desire, in this most difficult matter, to do their duty to the girls and to society. Some girls are unfit to be married. Are all your girls, or is any one of your girls, to be put into this class? Because if so, one part of your duty at least is clear and definite. There is no lottery here, in or out of marriage. You have to bring up your girls, or that one of your girls, to a life of single blessedness, and the sooner you begin, and the more unwaveringly you follow that plan, the more certain you are of success.

Why are some girls unfit to be married? Broadly speaking, because by reason of mis-

fortune or fault, or a mixture of the two, they are unhealthy in mind or body. It may be the girl's fault; it is more often the fault of someone else, and her misfortune. Possibly, her mother may not be without blame in the matter. Her mother sinned ignorantly, perhaps; but though ignorance may lessen guilt, which we poor mortals cannot measure, it does not lessen punishment, which we, in some rough way, can appraise. And though wrongdoing always brings punishment, it does not always lay it on the back of the sinner. One thing is certain—there has been fault or folly, sometime, somewhere, and your girl must pay the penalty. It is very sad, it may seem even unfair, that for no fault of her own a girl should be cut off from the first from any hope of the best and fullest life. But that is one of the many unfathomable mysteries of life we can never understand. But we can get above sorrow by bowing our heads before the law. Let the girl pay the penalty without flinching, for the wrong will not be undone until your girl has paid this, or some one else has paid a severer penalty. It is the fashion to write plainly and talk hotly about the unfit-

ness of some men to become husbands and fathers; the subject seems to have a peculiar attraction for some minds. But I think that the warnings have been often a little onesided: it is, without doubt, true that a weakly or diseased man commonly has weakly or diseased children; but it is even truer that a weakly or diseased woman seldom has children who are up to the average in mind or body. And apart from acknowledged disease, women of unstable or feeble nerves are unfit either to bear children or to bring them up. And such women are seldom either happy or desirable as wives, though they are often extremely anxious to make trial of the holy estate of matrimony; and their relatives often actively push forward any possible marriage, with a sort of wild idea that as they are a nuisance at home any change may be a change for the better. The desire in such cases is not any criterion of fitness.

The fitness of men for the married estate is not my subject, but I shall not have said my say about woman's duty unless I state plainly that on one side of the question, at the least, men hold a sounder faith than do women. I

wish that girls were taught that it is wrong, and also disgusting to any clean sense, to marry a man who is sickly, or diseased, or deformed, or outwardly repulsive, or wicked. At present public opinion among women leaves much to be desired. Take a man and woman of equal unattractiveness: men will turn away from the woman, and the blessed result is that she leaves no progeny behind her; but women, even nice women, religious women, will marry the man, having been brought up in the belief that it is necessarily a noble thing to comfort the afflicted, no matter by what means it is accomplished, nor who pays the reckoning. No doubt the greed for money and position, desire to marry somebody, and the fear of missing a last chance, all enter into the settlement of the question. But sentiment also enters thereinto. The ideas and faiths that we have been brought up in become a part of our being. And no one can shake herself free of the faith concerning marriage held by her mother, the one married woman whom unmarried women and girls know at the strong and weak moments of existence. And mothers can, in their own girls, foster a healthy sentiment, though they cannot alter the present

balance of the sexes, nor the prevailing distribution of wealth.

But once more a perplexed mother exclaims : "What is the good of all this general information, and all these wise saws to me ? How am I to know which one, or whether any one, of my girls should not marry ? They are all dear, good girls, as you would say if you knew them as well as I do. Yet perhaps you will say that a mother's love blinds her. Well ! and if I can't see, how am I to act ?"

In the first place, some girls are born deformed or defective. A girl may have one sense too little, or be more or less misshapen in body, or wanting in mind or in mental control. Then the direct call of duty is there from the beginning of the child's life ; it does not burst upon you suddenly as the girl is beginning to grow up. Duty is, in so far, easier to perform. A lifelong burden weighs lighter than one unexpectedly laid on our shoulders. I shall be told that such defects make it impossible for a girl to marry, because with them no proposals of marriage are made to her. But men of a sort will marry a sickly, or deformed woman if she has money. And to take another

familiar example, there is a certain demand for deaf and dumb wives by deaf and dumb husbands; the theory of bringing comfort to the afflicted and relief to the afflicted's family, and letting posterity pay the reckoning, here comes in strong. Moreover, some defects of body and mind are known only to a girl's near relations, perhaps only to her mother. Some girls, born all right, develop some complaint, which cannot be cured, or which leaves disastrous after effects. Some, without any complaint that one could put a name to, are sickly all round. Sometimes a family complaint assumes large proportions, and forces you to see that for the sake of humanity your family had better die out now, by your own conscious act, rather than by the slow torturing processes of Nature some generations hence. All these sorrows are possible. Every sensible and thoughtful woman knows that they are possible, and must have faced such problems in the abstract a thousand times. Face them now in the concrete example of your girl's life. Bring up your girl who is sickly, deformed, defective, diseased, to live a life of single blessedness. It is quite possible to do this, including the

blessedness. If a happy marriage is the best thing in the world, certainly a happy old-maidhood comes next and close after it. But to be happy alone you must know how to stand alone, and that is a power most easily cultivated in early life. A power! To call it a habit would be as near to the truth. Habituate your daughter who ought not to marry to think and act and live on her own responsibility. Teach her to take care of herself, since, when you are gone, she is to have no one to take care of her. If she is even a little too independent in thought and action, what does that matter? Men don't like independent women? So every one says, and it may be true. But if men don't prefer her, what does that mean but that you have attained precisely the result you were working for? Your daughter is likely to remain unmarried for the reason that thousands of better women do the like, because no one asks her to marry. And she lives and dies a spinster, as you intend she should, not because of an arbitrary regulation, but by reason of unfettered choice.

And, be it remembered, women accustomed to independent thought and action sometimes

do not like men taken in the lump, which result, in this special case, is yet more to be desired. Since, for the sake of society, it is a good thing that your daughter should not marry, it were a better thing that she should have no wish to marry.

Women who lead a busy and independent life, though they will always give up their independence for *the* man, give it up always with a sigh, and are not anxious to give it up at the bidding of *any* man who asks the gift. Their independence is very precious to them; and this precious thing you can procure, if you will, to cheer your girl's solitary life.

"Ah! but there's nothing like the dependence of a happy marriage." Maybe; I have never denied it. But this girl can't be happily married; she can't make a good wife to her husband; she can never see good and happy children growing up round her. Such a blessed fate is out of the question. She can no more do that than you can be born of another nationality than your own, or than you can grow a cubit taller than you are. Instead of lamenting over what cannot be, how much wiser to make the best of what is!



Of course you regret the solitariness of the girl's life; of course you would prefer a nice son-in-law and dear grandchildren, not to speak of the immediate gratification afforded by the wedding, and your neighbours' approval and envy. Of course it will cost you something to encourage the growth of a young and independent life by the side of your own. Independence of action means danger of trespass, and independence of thought means liberty to disagree with you, or even with papa; and it is not to be supposed that the young person will always be in the right, or will, for the time, ever see that she is in the wrong. There is a strong likeness between mothers and daughters, and the same thing may be said of you. "He that comes of a hen must scrape." You are not always right, but when it comes to a difference of opinion between you and your daughter, naturally you always think you are!

Bring up all the girls to have a mind of their own, but above all give the joy of independent thought to the girl who is not to marry; for she must learn to steer her own course, or else, in the common routine of events,

you must leave her presently alone, a rudderless ship on the ocean of life. And then, after all your pains and striving, she will marry the first fool who asks her (and a fool or a knave will ask her unless you have left her penniless), not because she hopes for much bliss in matrimony, but just for the sake of setting some man at the helm.

And now about the other girls, who may or who may not marry. We agree that we would rather they remained single than married amiss, but that a happy marriage is what we supremely desire for each one of them. And that being our faith, we teach it diligently to the girls, all and sundry. They wish to be married, and look forward with fond anticipation to the day when they shall follow their mother's example, and gladly leave home and kindred with the man they love. So runs God's ordinance in the world, and for my part, I see neither joke nor shame adhering to this fundamental fact of human nature. But if it is the thing parents supremely desire, they are willing to sacrifice something to attain it. Papa prefers, no doubt, talking sense with men of his own age; and mamma, who has the

housekeeping to see to, finds it a nuisance to provide for a posse of young men and maidens who plainly show that they think our day is over and their day has come. "The truth, though more precious than silver and gold, Is, in certain seasons, most thorny to hold."

But do what we will, as things at present are, all English girls cannot marry, for the plain reason that there are not enough men to marry them. Considering mankind from the matrimonial point of view solely, there are over half a million of superfluous women; and if we could take the professional classes, or the population of what the house agents call "residential neighbourhoods" alone, we should find a yet greater disparity of numbers. If husbands were dealt out fairly and squarely to all families, we should find that out of every group of middle-class girls some must remain single. Of course some of the "superfluous women" are widows, *i.e.*, women whose husbands, older or sicklier than themselves, have died first. A bridegroom usually is older than a bride, sometimes much older; and as women live longer than men (as reference to any annuity table shows) it must be that the

number of widows is large, and that it will get larger if for any cause men postpone marriage, and marry in or past middle life women much their juniors.

It is one of the arguments in favour of marriage (if any be needed) that widows are usually so ready to undertake its risks a second time, and this, often, even when their first venture has seemed to outsiders a singularly unfortunate one. At any rate, widows go into columns of figures as candidates for husbands beside spinsters of their own age; possibly in real life they may appear beside spinsters of the preceding decade.

Of marriageable men, how many have the making of a good husband in them? Some are unfitted by physical infirmity. Among the unmarried of both sexes are cripples, imbeciles, lunatics, and the like, with a good many persons whom it might be safer not to name and classify in writing. Some are disqualified by bad temper, bad morals, or bad habit. A few are confirmed old bachelors. Some men are unable to marry because they cannot earn, and no one has earned for them a sufficient fortune. Some remain single by reason of the

helpless female relatives who cling round their necks.

Any woman's daughter may be asked in marriage by a man to whom she must say "No." And as she says it, she knows that so long as she lives she may never have another chance. All the crude forces of nature, and most of the strong forces of society, pull towards the affirmative side. A woman needs strength and courage to take her life in her hands and willingly to choose to live it alone. And suppose a man can offer, besides his unworthy self, money and ease and position, while unmarried the woman has no money, nor means of earning it, and must perpetually stunt and deny, not merely one, but all the desires of the flesh? Do you not wonder that women refuse unworthy husbands as often as they actually do?

If you wish your daughter to be happily married, strengthen her so that she may dare to wait till the right man comes, or even while he tarries. It is nonsense to say that all English girls have free choice in marriage. There can be no free choice while for the majority marriage is weighted with money, and spinsterhood is inseparable from penury; there can be no free

choice in any matter for girls who know nothing of life ; and who are trained to do as they are bid, before they are taught the difference between right and wrong.

But if courage to wait for it is one ingredient of a happy marriage, another, and a large one, is the right kind of wife ; and that is the last thing people think of. Among all the things that girls learn, how many have the remotest connection with the life and duties of the average wife ? One might think, to run over the school curriculum, that all the girls were going to marry schoolmasters, and that each one would have to undertake a class in the school.

We have agreed to hope that the girls who may marry, will marry. Then bring them up fit for the life that you destine them to fulfil. Teach them those things that in your opinion a wife ought to know. These things differ according to individual tastes and social position, and I do not pretend to decide on a wife's duties. I cannot possibly know as much about that as the mother of any girl. What do you wish your son's wife to know ? Here is one practical guide.

“ Sons never marry the girls their mothers

would have chosen for them!" That is true enough; but you are not training a wife for your own son, but for another woman's son, and he evidently (since he is going to marry your girl) has better taste.

One thing there is that all women are the better for knowing—how to manage a house. A second thing we hope all married women will have to learn—how to manage children. The girls might begin upon these in very early life. And as they grow older, and come to marriageable age, we may remember that in these days all sensible persons are of opinion that no man or woman is fit to be married who is not also fit to know, at least in outline, the laws and facts that govern the birth of children. You say that a perfect marriage is the best thing on earth. Tell your girls of this perfection, as you know it or conceive it to be. There can be no need for educational purposes to speak of what is foul, or cruel, or tyrannical, or shameful. She who has once caught a glimpse of heaven will never wilfully stride into hell. And this method of instruction is not open to the objection that it may sully the purity of your daughter's mind.

What ! This instruction also is impure ? Nonsense. You have agreed that a good marriage is the best and holiest thing on earth—that is, the holiest thing of which you have or can have any positive cognizance. How can a thing be at once holy and degrading ? It is the foulness sometimes, and the tyranny and cruelty often, that you daren't speak of, and that perhaps you would know less intimately about if a generation or two ago it had been the custom to instruct girls in these things that belong unto their peace. Many a woman tells pitiful and ghastly tales of her honeymoon, and they all end with the same cry : ' Oh ! if only my mother had helped me.' And I beg you, by a few timely and tender words, to save yourself from such a bitter reproach.

For marriage and the birth of children are not accidents of life, with which by chance you must reckon ; they are the fundamental facts of life, and upon them all society is built. God does not seem to you omnipresent nor all powerful in this world of His creation, if you cannot see, clearly enough to show to those dependent on you for guidance, that His



eternal laws of right and wrong are binding at all times and upon all His creatures; upon men as upon women; in things seen and things hidden; from the beginning and on the birthday not less than in the hour of death and in the day of judgment.

From the point of view of society, the birth of children is the, I had almost said the only, justification for marriage. The community cares nothing for your girl's personal ease and gratification. It does society no good that she should be happy, nor any hurt if she is miserable, except in so far as happiness is a stimulant to useful work, and misery a depressant and a hindrance. Society is essentially self-regarding. There is nothing so essential for the progress of society and civilisation as a constant supply of sound and capable citizens; and the good citizens of the generation that is to follow ours are now to be born into those families where capability and soundness are a heritage. England needs good children. Your girl is healthy and strong, wise and good? Then let her marry a husband meet for her, and leave, as her legacy to the world, sons and daughters like herself and him. No

work that she can do will deserve better of her country. Do not tell me what I have heard a hundred times before, about over-population, nor urge that the uncertainty of life makes you fear for the future of children whom you therefore fear to bring into the world! Ever since history began, timorous men and women have feared the future, and predicted terrible occurrences for the days when they would no longer be there to see how things were going. Cowardice is not peculiar to our own time. But the world goes on slowly improving. We should not like to live in days like our grandmothers', nor will your grandchildren desire to change dates with you. The world is not overstocked with good men and women, nor is it likely to be so in any future that we can foresee. It may be overstocked with sickly and incapable people, but that is another matter.

This argument about over-population, when it is not the outcome of a diseased religion, happily now dying out, is often put forward by women who dare not in polite society own up to physical cowardice. We are so horribly afraid of pain and of trouble; so afraid of

## CHAPTER IX.

### THE GIRLS' MOTHERS.

“ Nothing comes out the sack but what was there.”

YOUR girl as she was, is, and will be, is the result of inheritance *plus* education. What she did not inherit from you or from her father, or from her father's people or from your people, has been planted in her, by yourself or by the persons you employed to train her, and has since that planting been kept alive by suitable treatment.

What a comfort it is to see the girl so good and beautiful, so strong in judgment and action, so capable and so worthy of all the praise she gets! How pleasant it is to pass the later years of one's life in all the warmth of that reflected light! How good it is to think of all the gifts that have been poured out at the feet of the girl we love best, and to know that

she has made the best use of them all ! Girls nowadays have a better chance than we had when we were young. And she is a different sort of creature to the girls our contemporaries. She does not care for the things that interested us long ago ; she is a step above many silly notions that we can remember cherishing ; she is stronger in mind and body ; she has a wider outlook and more power ; she knows how to take care of herself ; she grips fast what she sees as best. And sometimes she inclines towards claiming all the praise of her right-doing for herself. Not that it matters. We taught her long ago that the reward of good work, the only reward that is sure of coming, is to know that the work is well done ; but it takes more years than her few to understand how true that is. And so, now and again, to our amusement, she prides herself on being what she is. Would she have been what she is if we had crippled her movements, and turned her chances to our own pleasure, if we had not always stood in the shade when there was not room in the sunshine for two ? We did the giant's share of the work of making her, of so much of the work, that is, as has

been done in our lifetime; and it must be acknowledged that it is splendidly done. Look at her! Can anything be finer? Is there any work of which the world stands more in need?

Jealous? How can one be jealous of one's own success? The man who paints a picture or writes a book, is he jealous because all men say that it is a work of genius, or even though they declare that they could never have thought him capable of such a creation? Of another woman's daughter one might be jealous, or of another woman, one's rival. But to be jealous of all the good inherited from or through us two; to be jealous because the plants we planted and watered through long years have grown vigorously beyond our best hopes, that would be absurd. What good stuff there must have been in us or behind us! How well we chose our partner of a lifetime! How cunningly we planted, and watered, and pruned; and all the time our unknowing neighbours, who have none of them done half as well, believed themselves to be in a position to criticise and to counsel our action! We deserved success and we have got it.

And widening out the stream of our personal pride, we are carried along on the current of our generation. Who does not feel the spirit of a comrade among her contemporaries? I know what a woman of my own age is thinking about, for that is what I think also. We can tell together of the days long gone by; but first we will send the young people into another room, because they won't understand. Are women stronger and better than they were? Have they made a step onwards since we were young? We were tied and bound. We were not left free to do all that ought to have been done. But we did not tie ourselves, and were not to be held answerable for that; all we could do was to untie the limbs of the children when our time came. We know what we suffered; the children have not suffered in like manner. What has been the result? And for answer the girl stands there, a splendid success. Truly, in this sorrowful world, we may take some credit to our own generation, which has made the girls of the present generation what they are.

But if the girls' mothers stand to win, they must also stand to lose. The credit of every

magnificent success is yours by right; and therefore you must be debited with a heavy failure if you make one. Some mothers come and talk to me, and some rush into public print, with the express purpose of finding fault with the present day girl in general, and their own girls in particular. Girls of the present day (so I hear) are selfish, unsympathetic, headstrong, ill-mannered, and a host of other disagreeable things beside.

“And as for my Maud, I am sorry to say it, but I think she is no better than the rest. She is never willing to help me, and she is not even respectful in her manner. She insists upon having a latch-key, and she reads all manner of books that her father and I do not think suitable. And now she has taken into her head that she wants to take up a profession, because some old schoolfellow whom she fancies she admires has done so. There is enough to do to fit out the boys; we find it very hard to live. When *I* was a girl we were taught to live quietly at home, and to be obedient. I don’t know what the world is coming to.”

If your Maud is not the sort of girl you approve, why did not you train her up after

another fashion? Hot-headed youth is always on the look-out for a leader; youth is the anthropomorphic stage of existence, when every idea must take the shape and name of a human being. I have no doubt that your Maud *schwärms* over somebody at this moment, her schoolfellow, or schoolmistress, or a parson, or an unknown poet. Why did you not attract to yourself some of this worship going a begging? You were first in the field, and had a good chance. And if you wait awhile the others will go the way they came, though you remain in possession. As for a respectful manner, respect is the one thing that can be commanded even from the unwilling, if it is due. I suppose you want from your daughter the real thing, and not, what you may get from other members of your household, a respectful manner above stairs, and antagonism beneath?

She insists? Do you mean to say that, backed up as you are by position and experience, you cannot get your own way with her without a squabble? It is character that tells in the long run; perhaps your people "broke your will" when you were young; if so, I am truly sorry for you, but I am glad you did not do the same



cruel office by your daughter. When you were a girl you were taught to live quietly at home ? Yes ; until a husband came along, and took you away to practise the best and oldest of all professions for women. No doubt his choice was due to your own charms ; one can see that ; but if you possessed such a wealth of charm, and have not contrived to hand it on to your daughter with a little added, that is as likely to be your fault as hers. Even with all her mother's charm, your daughter may never marry. She may never see a man whom she is willing to marry, or the man she would marry may not ask her. It may be her fault, or yours, but I should be sorry to say that it is either. The world has altered since we were young, and there are many more old maids than there were. The world has altered, and we must move with the times. It is no good expecting your girl to live exactly as you did, for that is the one thing her environment forbids her to do. And powerful though you are in your moulding of the children, you must always obey nature if you would rule her. Of course if you make no effort to keep pace with and to understand the times in which you and

your daughter have to live together, she will soon find out that you stand still, and she will struggle on alone, as best she may. Most likely she will often miss the road, and will fall into bogs, and get entangled in brambles, and cut a sorry figure. That is what happens to girls who have no mother to show them the way; that is the penalty girls have to pay for belonging to mothers who imagine that it saves trouble to stand still. Of all people in the world her mother should be the last to jeer or to upbraid; plenty will do that.

Even in this small matter of the books she reads, if her mother does not go on with her, she must needs go on alone. No reasonable person can expect her to read the old story-books that her mother enjoyed twenty years ago. Their only merit was that they were a true picture of life, and the world has altered so much that they are not true now. Girls and boys in books twenty years old do not act as girls and boys of to-day do. Of course there are the classics, books for all time, books in whose immortality twenty years of love and honour count as nothing. But it is not in the houses where the immortals are loved

that this difficulty of reading comes to the fore. Girls who have browsed at will in a good library do not seek for food in literary rubbish heaps. The mothers who come to me complaining that their daughters read "all manner of books that her father and I do not think suitable," are generally women who fill their own spare time with books that I do not think very suitable for any woman who has a hard task to do in a short time, and none too much intelligence to do it with. Mothers tell me that they read to forget awhile the worries of the present moment; but girls read to learn at second hand that which, rightly or wrongly, they are withheld from learning at first hand. With the insatiable curiosity of youth, they want to know how other people do in that wide world into which one day they will have to step. It is much more interesting to see than to read about, and if they had active work to do, they most of them would not read much of anything. All they want is to widen their outlook on life. They have their life to live, and no one can live it for them. I say again that young folks long for a leader. Their impulses are towards per-

sons rather than books, towards living examples rather than printed matter. But we have done our best to lift them out of real life, and to force them to study books. And when, in spite of this, they still turn to their elders for guidance, they are pushed back to grope alone. Do you deny that? Have you never said yourself, or have you never heard others say, "I am sure I don't know what the young folks of the present day are coming to." Or, "As for me, I was brought up differently, and I wash my hands of the whole affair. It is impossible to know what girls want nowadays."

You did not half mean it? Perhaps not; but how is a girl to know how much you do mean, perplexed and worried as she is by the strange occupation of growing out of a child into a woman? Moreover, there is a good deal of truth in what you say. You *have* no clear idea of what the girls want. You have not even a fixed opinion as to what you want them to come to. You don't, and you know you don't, understand what lies at the bottom of the girl's aggressiveness, of her activity, of her inquisitiveness. Do you think her young eyes are not sharp enough to see? She asks for bread,

and you give her a stone; she will not ask a second time. She will go and ask of some other woman who perhaps will feed her on food that is not convenient for her. No one feels more strongly than I do that a growing girl is never so well fed as by her mother; but for the hungry any food is better than none.

There is another matter in which your complaints are contradictory. You say that the girl is selfish, and that therefore she gets her own way. I am sure that never happens. In the long run in every household it is the most unselfish who rules. By which of course I do not mean the weakest, nor the most indolent, nor the one who dare not fight even for a matter of principle. To be really unselfish, you must be woven of strong fibre. By mastering yourself you have gained strength to master your world. An unselfish person puts the right first, and herself nowhere. And though I am far from wishing to say that I think the girl of the present day is always an unselfish person, I do think that such force as she has comes out of her earnest, if blundering, efforts to follow at some cost to herself what she believes to be the right road.

She is not content to go on in the old ways, which, by common consent, were far from perfect; she wants to find something better; she is certain that she will find it; without which enthusiasm of belief there would be small hope of any progress. It is something to say for the girls that, take them all round, they are eager to do the best they know.

Are the mothers who complain always as anxious to follow the right at some cost to themselves? That mothers are the most unselfish people in the world, and therefore the people who rule the world, I am well aware. But I am writing and thinking of the few who cry out in their perplexity, not of the many who are ruling at home serene.

"I'm sure I've had enough trouble bringing them into the world; it's their turn to take a little trouble for me now." "This is my house, my dear, and I shall have it how I please; when you get a house of your own you can have it how you please." "When you're your own mistress, you can entertain your own friends; your father and I don't care to have our house overrun by boys and girls." "I expect you, my dear, to be civil to all my guests; it does not

matter whether you like them or not. No ; I will not invite that friend of yours to the house ; I've nothing to say against her, but I do not find her agreeable." " Follow a profession ! You think only of yourself ; what's to become of me ? " " Have so many uninterrupted hours of work every morning ? No such thing. Your father and I have had all the trouble, and expense of you, and if we want you we shall call." " I don't discuss, and I don't mean to discuss whether it's right ; I'm mistress, and I wish it ; that ought to be enough for you."

The point of these commonplace sayings has got blunted through use. It is my pleasure before your good ; my interests contrasted with yours ; my life guarded against your encroachments ; myself first, and right nowhere. There is, as we all know, " a good old rule and simple plan, that those should take who have the power, and those should keep who can." But it is not, in this nineteenth century, the way one can continue to govern.

And then the main perplexity of a girl's thoughts centres round the marriage question. It is a matter in which she must take second-

hand the thoughts and opinions of others. All that she has of her own are fancies and imaginations, more or less vain, yet concerning what is, and what she knows to be, the important question of her life. She wants to know; and in order to know she asks and reads; often she asks the wrong person, and reads books that I agree with you in stigmatising as not suitable. I understand very well that the books she reads, and you wish she didn't, are most of them books in which questions of sex are discussed by the light or in the shadow of modern thought. And I further agree that books of the kind are apt to produce violent indigestion—an indigestion that may even become chronic if the diet is too long continued. But the child is hungry; she must eat; if she has not one sort of food, she will snatch at another. Why do you not fill her mind with your own thoughts and opinions on such matters?

You are sure you do not know what your opinions are? You leave that to these young people who think they know everything? That is precisely what I suspected, but dare not have said if you had not. And that is what



the girls with their sharp eyes see. But if you have no opinions of your own, why are you so set against modern views? Some women, whatever party is in office, always sit on the opposition benches. You have been through it all; you have loved and lived; and you have come out on the other side with neither fixed opinions, nor useful facts, nor loving advice, nor timely warnings? You have been all down the path that your daughter must tread, and yet you cannot help her to find the way? What could she, or I, or anybody, say of you so condemnatory as this which you say of yourself? The writers of the indigestible morals at least profess to have something to say on a matter which concerns us all so nearly.

A girl's life and mind cannot be filled with a negation, nor with a bundle of them. You must have something to satisfy her withal. You keep on saying that you do not like her to do this, and to think thus; that you disapprove of the girls of the present day, and consider their literature unwholesome. But what do you like her to do? How should she think to please you? Which book do you tell her to read and ponder? I often wonder why the

usual way to praise a girl should be in a series of negative statements: she never does anything really wrong; she never rubs her father up the wrong way; she never says anything you wish she hadn't; she never offends anybody; she never asserts herself; she never does anything out-of-the-way.

Nor can you train a girl's mind in any given direction if you sway it first to one side and then to the other as the fancy takes you. Your fixed opinions, and not your vacillating thoughts, will grow and take root in your daughter's mind; and possibly you may be surprised to see what the crop is when it begins to sprout. For you will not see the thing you said with your lips, but the things you really cared most for in the bottom of your heart: and sometimes they do not look well in the light. Inheritance, education, imitation, all fight by the side of the mothers. The girls have not a chance against them if only they make up their minds and stick to it. We can have anything in the whole world that we choose if only we know what we want, and never waver. Only, having got what we want, we must take it as it is. And to get what we want, we must pay

the price. And in our pursuit of what we want, we must go straight on, and not stoop and turn to pick flowers by the way.

“ Ah ! but the children came to me so young. I know what I want now, but I did not know what I or they wanted then. I was a girl wholly without experience. I had never had to manage for anybody, nor even for myself. It is easy to find fault, but it doesn't do much good when one can't have one's time over again. Of course if I had known then what I know now I should have done very differently.”

But I do not find fault. I said a while ago that I thought the women of to-day had done wonders, considering. I am only pleading for the girls, that they should have the teaching and the experience that you now wish you had had when you were young. And think what your granddaughters will be, if your daughters have the best of chances and know how to use them. Perhaps, even then, we may have the reward of knowing that our little bit of work was well done.

This is a hard world for mothers as well as for daughters. At no age can we reckon on “ a

good time," nor can we have the "good time" by striving after it. To be sure, in middle life, when we like to fancy ourselves our own masters, we can have some sort of a good time if we set our best endeavours that way. But I say deliberately "some sort of a good\* time," because we have to pay such a heavy price ~~that~~, having paid it, we are often left poverty-stricken and miserable. Self-indulgent women are not happy women; that is a commonplace. And even if they were, a few years of middle-aged happiness would be dearly bought at the children's expense. And so we come back to a very early chapter, back to the beginning of life. For what are we all but children spelling out hard lessons; and some are a little nearer than the rest to the end of the book of this present life?



